

FEBRUARY 1956

TWO SHILLINGS NET

# CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL



# CHAMBERS'S WORLD GAZETTEER CROSSWORD

## ACROSS

- El Cabo Tormentoso now sounds like optimistic mantle (4 words: 4, 2, 4, 4).
- Plurality could be East, West or Mid (7).
- Real aim may be conspicuous, we learn, in Iberia (7).
- A park to be concealed? (4).
- Where one might have been sent to the glass house till 1936 (6).
- Real aim may be conspicuous, we learn, in Iberia (7).
- A park to be concealed? (4).
- Quite a hot dish, this Gold Coast town (6).
- Thin collection of Republics, with one more letter added from suffered defeat of 14 across (6).
- Air lily, once found on the Adriatic (7).
- Change of a vowel would make this town on the Indus sound belligerent (6).
- Insect border for a county (6).
- How any woman in, say, 9 or 12 across may be addressed (3).
- If travelling to this place, one can't help taking the right road (4).
- A dark place, obviously (5).
- No doubt gardeners live on the banks of this northern river (4).
- The Greeks had a word for it, we read, and so has the average Briton! (7).
- Or dream of a town in Oklahoma (7).
- Strip of territory which looks like direction to lazy housemaid (2 words: 6, 8).

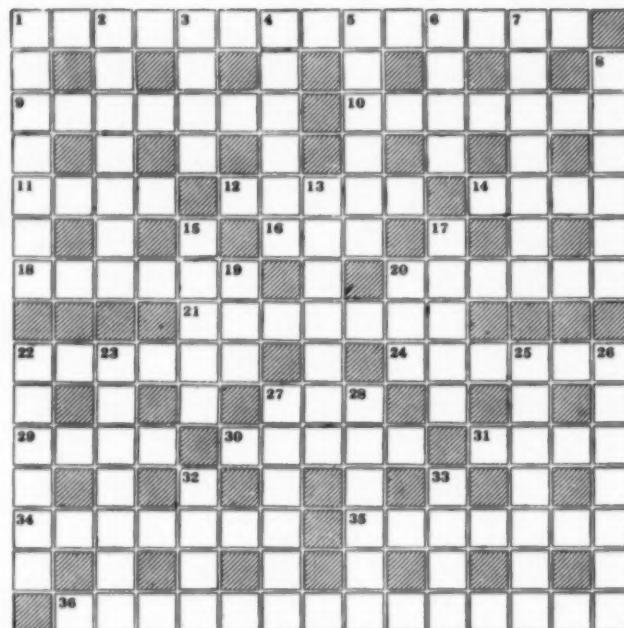
## DOWN

- You can see the ammunition here on Southampton Water (7).
- Do stamp here—in memory of the goose step? (7).
- In a state bordered with nothing (4).
- The gang's all here, and more, irrigating Bihar (6).
- Colourful state to be in when free (6).
- Where, in W. Germany, they bring home the bacon? (4).
- Is a pure capital port (7).
- A narrow neck here—and surely there must be a hat? (6).

Three prizes of book tokens to the value of ten shillings and sixpence each will be awarded to the senders of the first correct solutions opened.

*Entries must arrive not later than the 15th February.*

Envelopes should be clearly marked CROSSWORD in the top left-hand corner. The closing date unavoidably confines the entry to those resident in Great Britain, N. Ireland and Eire.



Composed by JOAN BENTON

26

## DOWN contd.

- Modern Eborscum (2 words: 3, 4).
- She is near East London—wearing blue, no doubt (5).
- Reptile which will be found in 8 down (6).
- Native, possibly, of 20 across (3).
- May be air on the coastline (8).
- May be described as 30 across, only in a big way (6).
- O impact, on Mexican lagoons (7).
- Sequoia city of California (7).
- How one might possibly address man in 5 down (7).
- Get a line on Tunisia (6).
- Plenty of cold vegetables on this Argentine river (6).
- Indonesian isle for those with a taste for figures (4).
- Smelt in this river? (6).

*Supreme for all  
geographical problems*

**CHAMBERS'S  
WORLD  
GAZETTEER**

AND GEOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY

*Entries to W. & R. CHAMBERS, LTD., 11 THISTLE STREET, EDINBURGH 2*

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# Never Pipe the Fiddler Aboard

---

FRANCIS GOTTF

I THINK Captain Varney Potter is the thickest-skinned and the luckiest man I ever shipped with; also the greatest windgut. He's good, and he knows it, and he tells everybody. I just lived to see the day when I'd see him humbled, and I hoped it would be soon, while I was still cook on the *Well-We-Do*, Varney's scallop-draagger.

He surveyed Sam Sparrows, our new mess-boy, with a kindly eye. 'You want to know my system in always winning bets? Smart boy! Now listen, Sammy—I always bet on a sure thing.'

I nudged Sam, not wanting to see him hurt in his pocket-book. I knew Varney Potter. 'Better get started on them spuds, son.'

But the boy wouldn't listen to me, so I gave up. I could see that he admired Varney considerably. I'm creeping past seventy now and there's one thing I'm afraid of—that I'll have to live ashore some day. So I didn't want to get any skipper riled at me.

'Cap'n,' Sam said, 'I was always taught that there's no such thing as a sure thing.'

'You was taught wrong, son. Now—just

to teach you a lesson, understand—I'm going to make a little bet with you. Now, how far are we from land?'

'Accordin' to the noon sight, about three hundred and fifty miles.'

'Right.' Varney rolled a fat cigar. 'Now, you wouldn't expect to meet up with a small one-man boat, in this exact position, crossing the ocean, would you?'

'No, sir.'

'Well, to clinch it, let's set a time-limit—say within the next two hours. If we don't sight such a craft, I pay you one hundred dollars—and if we do, you pay me.'

Grinning, Sam pushed his fingers through his yellow hair. 'Looks like I got you hooked, Cap'n.'

'Shake.'

They shook.

I groaned.

Varney turned to me. 'You witness the bet, Alex.'

'Blast you, Varney! You know this boy has to support his mother.'

Varney looked pained. 'Now, Alex, he's

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gettin' a good berth aboard the *Well-We-Do*. If he loses, it'll be a lesson to him.'

'You're tinkering with Providence,' I warned. 'Piping small boats out o' nowhere, just to satisfy your vanity.'

Varney laughed. 'You're getting old and religious-feeling, Alex.'

SAM followed me down into the galley, where we got to work on supper. He didn't get much done, though; every few minutes he'd poke his head topside.

At last I took pity on him. 'You got exactly nine minutes left to win the bet in, Sam. Skin your hide up the foremast, if you want.'

He took off like a greased banana-peel. I've been fishing the Banks for fifty-five years, and I was inclined to agree with the boy—there's never a sure thing. However, Varney had never yet lost a bet.

With sixty seconds to go, I couldn't stand it any longer; I went topside, watch in hand. Varney had his out, too, a heavy gold one he'd won in a bet with a steamer captain. All hands were on deck by now, but there were no side bets. Every jackdragger aboard had learned his lesson from Captain Varney Potter.

Then, with thirty seconds to go, I heard Sam's voice drift down from aloft, disappointed: 'Lifeboat on the port bow, sir!'

Sour music! However, all hands perked up, and Hake Busby started aloft. I looked up at Varney, standing on the catwalk. He was taken aback; a good actor, Varney.

'I don't see a thing,' I said, 'and time's up.'

'The boy ain't going to welsh, Alex,' Varney grinned. 'If there's a lifeboat off there, she was sighted within the time-limit.'

I climbed up to the pilot-house and got the binoculars. 'You win, Varney,' I said, grudgingly, picking up a speck on the horizon.

With one arm over the foretop, Hake looked down, grinning. 'She's a lifeboat, all right, dead ahead.'

I turned to Varney. 'She's got to have a man in her, steering a course, to make the bet stick. No derelicts.'

Varney laughed. 'Sure—sure, Alex.'

Well, I soon picked her up good in the glasses. She was about twenty-eight feet long, weathered, with a turtle-deck cuddy forward. She carried a patched sail, and had a man steering her. She was about as disreputable an outfit as I ever saw, but able.

As we drew nearer, Sam said: 'I hear music.' Someone guffawed. 'The air up there gone to your head, Sam?'

Then we looked at each other in wonder. We all heard it—a queer, lonesome kind of music. When we'd come abeam of the life-boat, the man in her looked toward us, as if noticing us for the first time, and laid down a fiddle. Still steering with one knee, he beckoned he'd like to come aboard. So we stopped and lay to.

THE man was old, small but strong, with big hands hanging from blocky wrists. Wind, wave, and sun had bleached his clothes to a dull green. A brighter splash of green moved against his neck, and I saw that it was a bird. Then, as we coursed nearer, I got a good look at him, and I couldn't believe my eyes.

I turned to Varney. 'Don't take that man aboard, Cap'n—ever!' I couldn't keep my teeth from clinking. 'I ain't seen him in over fifty years, but I'd know him anywhere. Why he ain't dead, I dunno—why, he must be close to a hundred years old! And meaner'n hell!'

Varney laughed. 'Why don't you forget your fifty-year grudge, Alex, and pipe him aboard with a glad hand? Why, he ain't bigger'n a peanut, just a harmless old sailor-man. You ought to be ashamed, Alex; this ain't like you at all.'

'Please, Varney—'

'He probably needs sweet water.'

'Well, give it to him, give him anything to get rid of him.'

Varney turned his back. 'Give the old duffer a hand, boys.'

He didn't need any help. He was up and over the side as limber as a boy, painter in hand. He didn't look much different from the memory of him branded on my mind—except that he'd lost all his hair and seemed even smaller than I remembered him. The little green bird on his shoulder—it was a parakeet.

He greeted all hands in a croaky voice. 'Nice day, boys. I'm Willie McGilliecuss. Where might you be bound?'

'Nowhere,' Varney said. 'Rockland out, Rockland back. We're scallop-dragging.'

Willie raked Varney with his one good eye. 'You Cap'n, eh?'

'Yes, sir—Captain Varney Potter. Where do you hail from, Captain McGilliecuss?'

Willie inspected our scallop rig. 'How

## NEVER PIPE THE FIDDLER ABOARD

times do change! Last time I crossed the Banks 'twas all sail, and dory-pullers settin' strings o' trawl.'

Varney grunted, surprised. 'Where you been holed up the past forty, fifty years?'

A wistful look, kind of like a cobweb, showed on Willie's face. 'Oh, t' hell 'n gone. Last was Australia, pearlin'.'

'You sailed from there in that rig?'

Willie bristled. 'What's wrong with her? Brine-washed, sure, but tight 'n able. Cap Slocum went around the world in one . . .'

Varney kind of lost his bluster. All hands crowded around Willie, curious and respectful. The parakeet shrilled angrily. I shivered; I'm an old man, and here was a critter telling about men and times long since dead when I was a boy. Then, too, I knew Willie, and I ain't ashamed to say I was scared. I hoped he wouldn't recognise me. I laid my hand over the X in my cheek.

YOUNG SAM was guppy-eyed, watching Willie and listening to him. He was a smart boy, graduated from high school that June and was pretty glib about H-bombs and jet-fighters. But seeing Willie and just smelling the windswept sea smell of him was like meeting old Davy Jones himself, something you just don't ever expect to do.

He counted out the hundred and smiled ruefully. Varney took the boy's money, beaming. 'Always remember to bet on a sure thing.'

'But—'

'How'd I know about him? Simple—I heard a freighter telling about hauling him when I listened in on short-wave this morning. I had already set a course to intercept him.' He laughed, pleased.

I didn't laugh. I say Varney is an honest and kind-hearted man, except when it comes to gambling. That's his black side, the side where the devil stands, peering in.

Willie's green eye gleamed when he saw the sheaf of currency Varney had in his wallet. 'So you're abettin' man, eh, Cappy?'

'I never lost a bet yet,' Varney said, complacently.

Willie wore a belt hand-braided out of rope-yarns and fastened with a pretty buckle cut out of a sea-shell. He hooked his horny thumbs in it and clumped back to brace himself when the ship rolled. I saw then, with horror, that Willie had a wooden leg; the

past roared in my head and I lived again the fight to the death with Willie McGillicuus.

'Let's you'n me make a little bet, Cappy,' Willie said, poking the parakeet away from his left eye.

Varney's shrewd glance passed from Willie's bare foot, up over his bleached dungarees. 'What you got for stakes?'

'Oh, my boat ag'in your'n.'

Varney laughed tolerantly. 'I'd have to have something more. The *Well-We-Do* is worth about sixty thousand as she floats. Your lifeboat wouldn't bring fifty bucks, unless sold as a museum-piece.' Then he added kindly: 'But I'll tell you what—I'll bet fifty against her, and you sail her home.'

'Nope,' Willie said, pulling a leather bag from under his faded shirt. 'I wants your boat, and I'll lay you something to boot.'

Varney's eyes brightened. 'Let's see what you got in the poke.'

Willie began opening some pieces of chamois. Several globules, glowing and beautiful, rolled out, settling in the rope scars in his palm. Someone swore, softly.

'Pearls!' said Varney.

Willie's lip tightened over jagged teeth. 'Genuine, Cappy, cream of my take Down Under.'

Varney's voice showed respect and awe. 'How much they worth?'

'Bout eighty thousand. And—' Willie added significantly, 'they're insured.'

Varney trembled, wet his lips, tempted yet careful. 'I've never yet lost a bet, Cap'n McGillicuus.'

'So?' Willie rolled the pearls to catch the sunbeams.

'And I always bet on a sure thing,' Varney said.

'So?' Willie said; he caressed a pearl.

The sweat beaded on Varney's jowls as he looked lovingly along the lines of the *Well-We-Do*, then into the questioning eyes of his men, then at the devilish enticement of the pearls.

Willie unwrapped another, a creamy beauty. 'Pretty pretties, ain't they, Cappy?'

'All or nothing?' Varney asked.

'All or nothing,' Willie said.

'God!' Varney swallowed hard.

'A deal?' Willie was a trifle contemptuous, a trifle amused.

'All right!' Varney kind of gasped, as if going in water over his head. 'I'll take you up.'

Lovingly, Willie stroked the parakeet with

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his rough cheek. 'I thought you would, Cappy.'

'Yes,' Varney said, never taking his glance off those pearls.

'Now, what'll we bet on, Cappy?' Willie asked softly. 'It must be a sure thing, eh, Cappy?'

'Yes, a sure thing.' Varney was still held.

'Death, Cappy! What's surer than death?'

Varney lifted a startled glance. 'I can't quite see—'

'Oh, yes, you can, Cappy! If there's no death aboard by sunrise to-morrow, you get the pearls. If there is, I get the ship. Eh, Cappy?'

Varney moaned. 'It's a deal.'

'Let's drink on it, Cappy.'

Willie had a flask on his hip. Varney took a nip: Willie took a nip. Willie looked at me then, direct, for the first time. There was no more emotion in that pale-green eye than in a snake's; but I knew he recognised me, surprised—and afraid—because I was alive.

I searched the faces of my shipmates, and they were cold sober, and a bit scared. There wasn't a man jack, I suspected, but felt that Varney was carrying his gambling too far.

The parakeet was peering into Willie's ear. Suddenly he got hold of something, braced himself, and gave a yank. Out came a hair. Willie kind of chortled. The parakeet chortled just like him; nobody could tell the difference. Willie loved that bird all right.

Varney took Willie up into the pilot-house. I knew that there wouldn't be any more fishing that day.

WILLIAMS said to me, disgusted: 'If Varney wants to gamble on his own life, that's his business. But when he startsbettin' on our'n—'

I just nodded, too blame scared to talk. I felt guilty, too, and a mite awed; more'n once, when sore at Varney, I'd vowed to high Heaven that I'd live to see Varney lose a bet some day. Now it looked as if the good Lord was going to make me pay the price of humiliating Varney.

I found myself down in the galley getting supper. I was just a fat, old, beat-out scakook, with his sins caught up on him. I didn't dare beg Varney to call the bet off; I might have to tell him too much. Anyway, the dirty business was strictly between me and Willie.

After a while, Sam came down, his face all lit up and boyish. 'Alex,' he said, 'I'm going to Australia.'

'Boy,' I said, 'you better stay to home.'

'But, Alex, if a man with only one leg and one eye can pick up a fortune in pearls—'

'He probably stole 'em,' I said sourly.

'But, Alex—'

'Batten that fool hatch, son,' I said, real fierce, 'and get the table set.'

Sam gave me a hurt look and shut up. The crew began drifting down, thirsty and hungry. It don't take an old flap-jack long to gauge the temper of the men he has to feed every day. The younger hands had their imaginations working overtime, like Sam; but the older ones were already getting a little sick of Willie McGilliecuoss.

Sam looked up from pouring coffee. 'The skipper promised he'd give us all a share in the pearls, just like ship's profits.'

Bruce McBride laid down his fork. He was almost as old as me, but still the strongest man on board. 'I'll have no part of it,' he said. 'If Varney persists in this blasphemy, he'll hand me my time as soon as we hit the dock.'

'Yes,' Williams agreed. 'We're fishermen, not gamblers. I, for one, know the Devil when I meet him, and I want no part of him.'

'Let's look at it this way,' Busby said. 'The old pearly is awful old. We might as well enjoy them pearls.'

'Aye,' McBride coughed. 'But suppose he wins, Hake me boy! Which one of you are willin' to be the dead man?'

The younger men twisted uneasily, confused and taken aback. All in all, it was a glum meal. I made up a tray for Varney and Willie for Sam to take up to the pilot-house. I thought desperately of putting rat-poison in Willie's coffee, but I didn't. I knew I'd have to think of something that would ride with my conscience.

NIGHT came on, murky and foggy and quiet. We just drifted. I think Varney was feeling the pinch of his conscience now, and realised he'd made a pact with the bad one. He was padding about, restless, tapping the barometer, studying the faces of his men under the deck-lights, and staring down at Willie's weatherbeaten lifeboat.

Willie was aboard her in her dark cuddy, perhaps asleep, perhaps just waiting for the right moment to repay an old score. Wet with

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the chilling fog, I trembled as I stared over the rail. I'd have to board that nameless craft and face Willie. Perhaps I'd find a way.

Finally, all hands went below. The life-boat settled under me as I crept aboard. I hardly dared to breathe. At the sliding-hatch to the cuddy, partly open, I stopped, listening. The tiny forecastle smelled fetid, lived in—a man smell and a bird smell. I heard Willie burbling in sleep.

I tried to put myself in tune with the sea, and with Willie. The sea was Willie's country, this little boat, his home. He must be a lonely man. What would frighten Willie most? I waited.

The sea slapping against the strakes of the lifeboat, whispering, trying to warn Willie. The fog became damper, ran in drops off my nose; my moustache felt like a wet mop. If Willie should wake . . . now.

What was that? Then, close, I heard it again, a sleepy chirp. An idea came to me, sending a rosy glow down to my fingers and toes, warming me.

I rolled up my sleeve, eased my hand into the cuddy. I felt a bamboo cage, covered with a cloth. If I took the cage, Willie might sense something was wrong. I would just take the bird.

The parakeet chirped. Willie stirred. I froze. Then, taking a deep breath, I tried again. This time I got the little door open, eased my hand into the cage and, up near the top, closed it over a tiny feathered body. The little heart beat fast against my hand, but he didn't seem to be frightened.

Then, pictures from the past gripped me; I couldn't move. I became again a messboy, on his first trip out, aboard the lumber-coaster *Kathie McDare*. As I had lived it in my dreams many times before, I lived again the fight to the death with Willie McGillicuuss.

There were five of us aboard the schooner. We'd shipped Willie in Havana to replace Larry Hastings, lost overboard. Willie was a harpoon man.

We were off Nassau, one hot night, when the trouble started. Over cards.

Willie killed the three of them, right there, in the forecastle. They died hard. Then Willie chased me. We fought all over the deck, and up and down the rigging; while the forecastle burned from the upset lamp. I have scars all over my body from that fight, besides this one here on my cheek. I finally got Willie, though, with his own harpoon; I

drove it deep into his leg, knocking him overboard. By then, the fire was racing up the jib sheets and rigging. I crawled to the dinghy, cut her free, and fell in.

I drifted for three days in the dinghy, unable to move, before being picked up by Bahama Island blacks. Of course, the schooner was gone, and I thought Willie was, too.

I shook myself free of this nightmare of the past and eased myself up over the side of the dragger. I rested against a shroud for a moment to catch my breath. I was calmer. It was now Willie's move. Short of killing Willie, which I would not do, I felt I had done the best I could. Then I hid the bird where Willie couldn't find him.

**A**FTER that, I sought my bunk, just a tired old man wanting to keep from being murdered.

I didn't think Willie could get down into the forecastle and alongside my bunk without my knowing it, but he did. I had wondered how he'd hoped to kill me and make it seem a natural death. Now I knew as I struggled for breath under a pillow he was smothering me with. If my mind and body had been drugged in sleep, he would have succeeded. My arms were pinned. But I got my mouth clear. 'Willie,' I whispered, 'if you kill me, you'll be killing your little bird.' You don't want that, do you, Willie? You think a lot of that little bird, don't you, Willie?'

His hands grew tense. 'What do you mean?'

'I got your little bird, Willie.'

'You lie.'

'No, Willie.'

'If you've hurt Rascal, Alex—' Willie kind of snarled.

'He's not hurt, Willie, but I've got him hid.'

Willie moaned. The tension slacked up on the pillow and I heard his peg-leg thump down the deck and up the ladder and fade away in the fog. I was weak with sweat.

I went topside. Willie met me there, caught me by the throat, backed me against a winch.

He was sobbing. 'Damn your greasy hide to hell, Alex Kiff! What have you done with Rascal?'

'He's safe, Willie,' I said. 'Nobody can ever find him, except me. If I die, he'll die, starved to death, all alone, the poor little fella—'

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'Alex, I'll give you enough pearls so's you can take it easy the rest of your days.'

'No, Willie. There's only one way you can save your little bird—take your pearls and go, now, this minute—and don't ever come back.'

'And Rascal?'

'I'm keeping him, Willie—as a hostage. I'll take good care of him.'

Willie dropped his hands, turned and clumped to the rail, sobbing: 'Rascal, poor little Rascal—'

Suddenly, I felt sorry for Willie. 'I'm glad I didn't kill you that night, Willie.'

'No fault o' your'n that you didn't, Alex.' His eye gleamed with hate. 'I floated all night, was picked up next mornin' by a limey bark. Anyway, I marked you, Alex. You're not so nice to look at now, are you, Alex?'

He went over the side. I cast off the lines. Soon the lifeboat merged with the fog, beyond the lights, and was gone. I got the parakeet, put him inside my shirt to warm him from the night chill, and stood there on deck a long time. Then, from afar off, riding the fog, I heard Willie playing his fiddle.

I couldn't stand it, and went below. It was the saddest and loneliest music I ever heard.

March First Story: *Revenge Upon Revenge* by Phyllis Bentley.

## Congress Thoughts

*The slow smoke rises as the minutes tick,  
The pencil scratches and the lighters click;  
On forty pages forty patterns grow  
As over drowsy heads the slow tides flow;  
And dully through the unrelenting day  
The dim assembly gropes—to lose its way.*

*Then, as the evening shadows fall more dense,  
Deeper oblivion sinks upon the sense;  
Words grow more blunt, the sharper outline blurs,  
As sleeper in his chair uneasy stirs;  
His waking thoughts on sweeter topics dwell  
And softer visions in the memory swell;  
Now, long-departed loves to life return—  
The dust of fires that long have ceased to burn.  
Did these all once in living accents speak  
Who now in measured boredom boom and squeak?  
Could these who buzz like all-too-faithful bees  
Make splendid love among the branching trees,  
Speak lyric vows beneath the woodland shade,  
Breaking them gaily as the vows were made?  
Did these same voices with their scannel drone  
Charm lips at dusk to draw them to their own?  
What light and laughing touch caressed the head  
Where now the hair is grey or thin or dead?  
Or could these voices, now from life withdrawn,  
Drown with their reeling song the choir of dawn?  
Was ever careless jest at love's mischance,  
Was all this solemn saunter once a dance?*

*Let me no further wounding questions ask  
Lifting from off my face the decent mask;  
Time's coffin-lid is on our common head—  
And we who talk of life are of the dead.*

KENNETH MACGOWAN.

# Postman-Poet

## *Edward Capern of Bideford*

A. G. K. LEONARD

A CENTURY ago, as the Crimean War drew to a victorious conclusion, Viscount Palmerston, Prime Minister of Britain, summoned to Whitehall a humble rural postman from Bideford, whom he greeted with the words: 'Mr Capern, your "Lion-Flag of England" and other patriotic poems gave me heart and hope at the time of my greatest anxiety in the day of England's trial.'

Now little regarded, Edward Capern was then widely acclaimed as 'the Devonshire Postman-Poet'. Queen Victoria expressed her approbation of his patriotic verses and the British commander in the Crimea had 'The Lion-Flag' reprinted as a broadsheet for circulation among his troops. Here are three representative stanzas out of the nine.

*The lion-flag of England!*  
Say, Britons, shall it wave,  
The scorn of every base-born serf,  
And jest of every slave;  
A sign to tell them how they beat  
The bravest of the earth,  
And teach them by our England's fate  
To magnify their worth?  
'Forbid it, Heav'n,' the nations cry,  
In council gravely met;  
'We'll send her aid across the seas,  
And she shall conquer yet.'

*Have faith in dear old England!*  
Her lion-hearts lie dead;  
But tens of thousands ready wait  
To battle in their stead.  
They know from history's reddest page,  
That nations, when opprest,  
Must point their swords for arguments  
Against the tyrant's breast.  
While voices from the grand old past  
Come pleading—'Pay your debt:

*For you we fought—defend our fame,  
And you shall conquer yet.'*

*Hurrah! for dear Old England!  
Come, Britons, one and all,  
Strike on, strike hard, strike home, strike  
sure,  
Till WAR himself shall fall;  
Till Time, on pointing finger wears  
The precious pearl of Peace,  
And earth sends up her anthem-shout  
That loving hearts increase:  
Fight on, keep heart, look up, be firm;  
And never once forget  
That Heaven proclaims this God-stamped  
truth,  
'The Right shall conquer yet.'*

In another stanza is a reminder, familiar in ring through later trials, that Britain's heritage  
*Was bought with blood and sweat,*

while immediately following is a warning, amusingly topical after a hundred years, that  
*... such who sheath their swords to rust  
May see Siberia yet.*

Capern's good American friend, Elihu Burritt, 'the Learned Blacksmith', who walked many miles in his company, relates how 'The Lion-Flag' came to be written. One morning the war news so stirred the letter-carrier's emotions that he could not wait to finish his deliveries before penning down his fast-rushing thoughts, nor did a rigid schedule allow him to pause in his round. 'So he ran with all his might and main for a third of a mile, then sat down by the hedgeside, and, all panting with the race for time, found that he had caught enough of it for pencilling on his knee a whole verse of his song. Thus he ran and wrote, each

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stanza costing him a race that made the hot perspiration fall upon the soiled and crumpled paper.'

**T**HE Robert Burns of Devonshire', who composed his verses under such unusual conditions, was born at Tiverton on 21st January 1819, the eldest of a local baker's eight children. While still a baby, he was taken with his family to Barnstaple, and on his mother becoming bedridden he ended his scanty dame-school education to begin work in a lace factory at the age of nine.

Toiling long hours for a meagre wage, he found the close work affecting his eyesight and he was obliged to turn his hand to other callings, including shoe-mending and cabinet-making—at four shillings a week. For a while he made a precarious living as a travelling portrait-painter, but his talent here does not appear to have been more than ordinary, remarkable though his latent abilities as a sensitive creator of word-pictures proved to be.

Happily, in 1847 the good offices of a friendly Bideford tradesman gave Capern release from the workshop by procuring his appointment as a rural letter-carrier, a post which he held for seventeen years.

Already he had pursued a stiff course of self-education in the classics of English literature and in his brief leisure hours had written some creditable verses. Although the editor of the *North Devon Journal* doubted their authenticity and declined to publish them, Capern's contributions were soon being welcomed by several local papers. The postman-poet found constant inspiration in his daily round of thirteen miles from Bideford to Buckland Brewer and back—along the banks of the Torridge, through the lovely wooded Yeo Vale, and up the long beech-lined hill to the village, with various detours to scattered farms and cottages.

It was an ideal occupation for a man of Capern's simple poetic temperament:

*O, the postman's is as happy a life  
As any one's, I trow;  
Wand'ring away where the dragon-flies play,  
And brooks sing soft and slow;  
And watching the lark as he soars on high,  
To carol in yonder cloud,  
'He sings in his labour, and why not I?'  
The postman sings aloud.  
And many a brace of humble rhymes  
His pleasant soul hath made,*

*Of birds, and flowers, and happy times,  
In sunshine and in shade.*

Although Capern did his walk seven days a week in all seasons and weathers, bringing home but ten and sixpence to keep himself, his 'blithe and bonnie Janie', and their two children, he counted himself 'happy where thousands would be discontented, and rich where many would be in want', for to domestic bliss and many friendships was added a never-failing delight in the North Devon countryside.

Some of Capern's lines on 'A Man I Know' may be taken as a self-portrait:

*He owns neither houses nor lands,  
His wealth is a character good;  
A pair of industrious hands,  
A drop of poetical blood.*

Perhaps it was only a drop. To-day's critics pay little notice to his output, remarkable though it was in both quality and quantity for a rural postman whose formal education comprised no more than four months at a dame-school. Tastes have changed, and the great vogue that Capern's lyrics enjoyed in his day must be attributed to the way in which he gratified the fashionable liking for 'native woodnotes wild'. As he himself wrote later:

*What is the secret of my Art?  
In honest faith I never knew it:  
I simply play the loyal part,  
And write as nature bids me do it.*

Capern had a keen appreciation of natural beauty, and his emotions were always genuine, but his verses tended to be undisciplined and over-sentimental at times, while against their simplicity and sincerity had to be set on occasion a lack of originality. He had a good ear for rhythm, but his metres were often too mechanical and overloaded with ornate or conventional expressions. Nevertheless, the best of Capern breathes the very essence of outdoor life in old Devonshire and remains pleasantly readable to-day. A graceful selection was issued as recently as 1939.

**C**APERN'S national recognition during the Crimean War led to the appearance in 1856 of *Poems*, a volume of his verse, edited and energetically promoted by William F. Rock, Barnstaple's greatest benefactor and patron of the arts. The first edition of 1000

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was sold out in three months, bringing the author a profit of £150, applied to the purchase of an annuity against his days of need, for his sight continued to deteriorate.

Subscribers included Lords Shaftesbury, Brougham, Palmerston, the Duke of Wellington and Rowland Hill, along with the Poet Laureate Tennyson, W. S. Landor, J. A. Froude, and Charles Kingsley. These great men of letters all held Capern in high esteem and were pleased to enjoy his personal friendship. The reviewers were to a man generous in their praise of Capern's collection, which went into a second edition in the year of publication and was reprinted in 1859 and 1869.

Palmerston, who always kept Capern's poems on his drawing-room table and delighted to read them aloud, gave tangible evidence of his admiration by procuring him a Civil List pension of £40 a year, which, as one of his last acts before his death in 1865, he increased to £60. The Post Office authorities also seem to have been impressed, for they raised Capern's wage to thirteen shillings a week and, what meant more to the poet, relieved him of Sunday duties.

A second volume of poems, *Ballads and Songs*, was issued in 1858 and reprinted the following year. Dedicated to Angelina Burdett Coutts, another good friend of Capern right up to the day she bore the cost of his funeral, it contained numerous rustic songs, homely in style and local in subject. They were mostly written to be sung to simple melodies of his own, for, in Rock's words: 'Mr Capern has an ear for music, he plays touchingly on the flute, and sings his own songs to his own tunes with striking energy or tenderness.'

Twelve of his original songs were issued in 1862 as *The Devonshire Melodist*, and among those several times visiting Capern's cottage to be entertained by the singing poet-postman was Prince Lucien Bonaparte.

One who knew Capern in the 1860's described him as 'The very beau ideal of a sound, hale and hearty Englishman', with reddish-brown hair, a clear and ruddy complexion and beard 'worn long and not too round'. Having by then grown 'somewhat corpulent and short-winded', he had taken to using a pony-cart on his mail round.

IN 1865 Capern retired from Post Office service, devoting his time wholly to lecturing and writing. That same year was published *Wayside Warbles*. In the preface he explained how 'some object or incident or a conversation by the roadside has often suggested matter for a short song, which the author has frequently thrown off at the moment. Having sung his ditty as he composed it, his next care has been to rescue such as he deemed worthy from oblivion. Hence the rude bar of a Devonshire stile or field-gate has often served him as a writing-desk. Or seated on the side of some friendly hedge, his post-bag resting on his knees, he has pencilled out his thoughts in the rough, to be polished up in the little cottage when he arrives at the end of his outward journey.'

*Wayside Warbles* contained some happy lines on Capern's beloved Torridge and an 'Ode to Bideford'—'my adopted home, nurse of my inspiration and my vaunt'. The ode was in prospect of leaving Bideford, for shortly afterwards he removed to Harborne, near Birmingham, where his son worked. During his stay there he contributed much new verse to the leading periodicals and had another collection, *Sungleams and Shadows*, issued in 1881. Some of his best-liked poems were translated into several languages.

He found plenty to delight him in rambles through the Black Country's green borderland, but still sighed for Devon again—'Sweet land of my love! I shall love thee for ever', and in 1884 he returned, his return being marked by many tributes from old admirers, including a £100 testimonial. Unable to find a suitable place to settle in at Tiverton, his birthplace, he eventually made his last home at Braunton, near Barnstaple, where he spent his closing years mainly in the garden of his charming cottage, still composing and singing with something of his old verve and nothing delighting him more than to entertain an appreciative visitor.

His devoted wife Jane—'intelligent, prudent and good'—died early in 1894 and the widower did not long survive the helpmeet whose loss he so keenly felt. He died on 5th June of the same year and was buried at Heanton Punchardon, where may be seen the 'Postman-Poet's' distinctive tombstone.

# Wireless Prospecting

T. BEDFORD FRANKLIN

IN the early days of wireless I was headmaster of a preparatory school of sixty boys and it was surprising how quickly some of the enthusiasts graduated from the crystal and cat's-whisker to valve sets, and eventually to all sorts of queer uses of the wireless-wave which had nothing to do with listening to the programmes provided. One boy, in particular, adapted wireless to the tracing of all the pipes which led water, gas, and electricity into the school, and helped every spring in the annual hunt for the metal corners of the many tennis courts which invariably got overgrown during the winter. As an added refinement, his instrument gave audible warning of its finding by tripping into action a tiny gramophone disc which announced: 'Here it is.' In fact, he devised a talking mine-detector long before its day.

When Daventry (5XX) began broadcasting on a 1500 metre wavelength in 1925 a diagram was issued showing the field-strength of the station at various distances from it. Ideally this diagram should have been a series of equally-spaced concentric circles having Daventry as centre, and showing how the field-strength faded out with distance. But the actual diagram was very far from this ideal and showed kinks in the curves where towns absorbed the wave and hills screened the valleys behind them. These were to be expected, but the most striking point about the diagram was the existence of kinks in the curves on open flat ground where no such causes of loss of field-strength were apparent. These variations seemed to be most noticeable at places where the wave crossed the junction of two different geological formations.

In a countryside where lead-mining was a thriving industry, any means of locating faults was obviously very valuable, and we set to work to make a wireless amplifier sensitive enough to measure small differences of wire-

less field-strength. Close at hand we had a wide selection of different rocks—limestone, millstone grit, coal measures, marl, and clay—on which to try out our ideas. Theoretically, the 1500 metre wireless-wave should penetrate into limestone about forty times as deeply as into clay, and into sandstone about twenty times, and I have picked up the Daventry programme nine hundred feet underground in the old workings of a lead-mine devoid of all pipes, rails, or other conductors, and half-a-mile away from the shaft.

It is apparently this great depth of penetration, with consequent loss of energy, which makes the field-strength so much less at the surface of limestone than clay. By working in many parts of England I was able to cover a large number of different rocks and arrive at the relative values of the field-strengths on them at the same distance from Daventry. These values showed that the value of the field-strength over clay was always about half as much again as over limestone in the same area. Near my school there were large areas of limestone, on which I obtained, as I moved about at approximately the same distance from Daventry, up to a hundred readings of the same value, but as soon as I passed off the limestone on to the millstone grit a quite different reading appeared. Near Stow in Gloucestershire, where limestone was faulted on Lias Clay, the field-strength jumped from 2 to 2-8 at a few feet as the fault was crossed.

One day, when I was checking the stability of my instrument by seeing how many consecutive readings of the same value I could get when moving about an area of deep millstone grit, I was surprised when in the space of a few feet the readings rose from 1-2 to 1-4. As the geological map gave no fault in the area, this was a completely new phenomenon, which could only be due to something cutting short the penetration of the wave on a straight

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line in a restricted area. There were many derelict mines in the neighbourhood, and in some of these good veins of lead had been abandoned owing to flooding of the mine. Fortunately records of these old mines were available, and when I compared my results with the mine maps I found that I had rediscovered an old lead vein, called Gregory's vein, at a depth of 130 feet. I realised that I had in my hands a means of discovering from the surface not only faults but also orebodies at a considerable depth below the surface.

THANKS to two friends who managed lead-producing mines near me, I was able to test this new discovery by working on the surface above their underground veins and orebodies and testing my results by their maps and mine records. In the process of these I was able to confirm the opinion of one of these mine-managers whose mine had lead in large cavities in the limestone as well as in ordinary veins. He had already emptied one of these cavities, so large that the miners were able to stand upright in it and cut out lumps of almost pure galena with a pick, and before leaving it he wanted to make sure that there was not another cavity near it. The base of the cavity was toadstone, a volcanic rock that occurs in limestone, and all his mine deputies advised him that it was never any use hunting for lead beneath the toadstone.

But the manager was firmly convinced that there was another similar cavity somewhere near, and as my instrument gave very decided indications of more lead beneath the floor of the cavity he decided to sink through the toadstone and make sure. This he did, and found another cavity full of almost pure galena and worth thousands of pounds. News of this discovery leaked out, and the following week an entirely imaginary interview with me was reported in the local paper. In this I was called the 'wizard of the moors' and endowed with powers I had never claimed, and certainly never possessed. In spite of this very undesirable publicity, which might well have killed the whole idea, the success of the method was so great that I did not lack commendation to any mine-manager who wanted to employ me.

MY first job, on a payment by results basis, was for a Staffordshire lead-mine, for

which I found what I hoped would be two good lead veins which were quite close to some present workings and could easily be tested by a short drive underground. I had not long to wait for the verdict, and in about eight weeks knew that my first commercial job had been a success. When a lead-mine in Durham, which had lost a lode where it had been dislocated by a fault, asked me to advise them, I realised that payment by results could not cover all surveys and that negative reports were sometimes worth more commercially than the finding of a new lode—for the manager of this mine had already spent a thousand pounds on useless bores, and I was being asked to prevent the spending of any more money to no purpose. By tracing the fault, I found the lost lode, but as it pinched out after a short distance I advised against spending any more money on it.

Lost lodes seem to have a curious fascination for mine-managers. A celebrated example was the lost Laxey lode in the Isle of Man. Years after it had been worked out, a tradition grew up that it still existed, but that it ran under the sea and so had never been pursued for fear of flooding. The Isle of Man Government decided to ask me to find out if there was any truth in these rumours, and for about three weeks, armed with a permit to go anywhere I liked in the island above or below ground, I worked on the Laxey lode. The Manx farmers are a sturdy independent race, and several of them made me produce my permit to account for my working on their land. On one occasion I was confronted with an irate farmer and his savage dog, over which he seemed to have little control. The farmer was impressed by my permit and its official seals, but the dog was not impressed by seals, and I was very glad when the grumbling farmer and growling dog both went off home. My survey appeared to show that the Laxey lode had all been properly worked out and that neither under the sea nor inland in the hills was there any lode valuable enough to make it worth while reopening the Laxey mine.

In Cumberland, on a large estate containing iron-ore, I was asked to see if there was a new area of haematite anywhere near the present workings, and before starting work the mine-manager asked me to submit to a test. He took me to a field in which twelve bores had been put down, some of which had found the haematite while others had missed it. The bores were marked and numbered, and my test was

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to find out which bores had been successful in striking the ore. I had a feeling that the manager had probably been persuaded into enlisting my help by someone in authority, and that he would not be sorry if I failed in the test. After a day's work in the field I took my report to his office and could not help feeling a bit triumphant when I heard that I had given the right answer for every one of the bores.

Perhaps I had been maligning the manager, for he was quite enthusiastic over the result now that he knew I was not a charlatan, and he gave me every help when I started an extensive survey for him. But this survey, which had begun with a flying-start, proved somewhat disappointing, for the new areas I found were a long distance from the present workings, and as they were at a great depth they could only be worked economically by putting down a new deep shaft, and that was out of the question at the time.

In my next survey I ran into sheets of iron pyrites—that bane of all mineral surveys, for which there was no remedy, for these sheets were generally near the surface and screened off all veins and orebodies beneath them. After this experience I always asked any mine-manager who asked me to work for him if he had iron pyrites in his area, and, if he had, I did not accept his offer of work.

This difficulty turned out a blessing in disguise, as I began to work out a method of discovering shallow-bedded ores and deposits of low mineral content, such as the iron-ores of the Midlands, pockets of sand and gravel, the depth to an underground bed of clay or the water-table, and kindred problems. These methods proved useful to many firms when I went to work in London. Water-boring firms wanted to know the depth to the London Clay, builder's supply-merchants were anxious to find new sand and gravel areas near their present workings, farmers on Romney Marsh, where the excellence of the sheep pastures largely depended on the depth of the water-table, wanted my advice, and others selling their land were anxious to know, before completing the sale, if their mineral rights were of any value.

As in all prospecting methods, the finding of a fault or a lode or bed of gravel was generally fairly easy, but the calculation of depth, which was all-important to the mine-manager in planning his approach from existing workings, to the boring-firm, and also to the gravel-owner for knowing how much overburden it was necessary for him to remove, was a matter which could only be estimated as the result of much work over many types of rock. My instrument was inexpensive, its use was quite simple, but the interpretation of the results was only valuable after years of experience.

PROBABLY because my fees were small in comparison with those of the commercial prospecting-firms, I had more work than I could do in my spare time, and in the ten years before the war I carried my instrument over many counties of England and Wales in trains, cars, buses, steamers, canal barges, and even up a mountain on my back where no other transport was available. I think I must have been the pioneer of this method of prospecting, for in all these years I never heard of or saw anyone else doing surveys with a simple instrument. Animals and humans were alike curious when they saw me at work. Many times I have been nudged in the back or licked on the neck by an inquisitive bullock when I was bending over my instrument taking a reading, and once when I was working near a road an expensive car stopped and the owner came up to me and said: 'My good man, what do you think you are doing?' Pomposity and condescension have always annoyed me, and I replied: 'Counting rabbits in their burrows.'

When the war started in 1939, more urgent forms of research put a stop to wireless prospecting, and by the time the war was over and things had returned more or less to normal I was too old to carry a fairly heavy instrument over miles of country as I had before. But I still have many happy memories of my surveys, when I saw more of my own country than I could ever have afforded to see any other way.



## Me and Smiggy

PETER PATTERSON

WHEN they buried Smiggy it was drizzling hard, and washy-grey.

When the vicar threw the first handful of clay in the grave it stuck to his fingers because it was wet. When it hit the coffin it banged, because the wetness had made it heavy.

I didn't throw any in because I didn't want to get my hands messed up.

When the vicar went away he had to lift his smock up so that he could walk in the mud. He had his trouser-legs tucked in his stockings. His boots were heavy with the red clay. I heard him shuffle his feet to clean his boots when he reached the path. Then he walked away down the path, and he kept shuffling his feet to get all of the mud off his boots.

I was left with the red clay, and the hole and Smiggy's coffin at the bottom. All of the graves were new here—big mounds, because they hadn't had time to sink. Some of the graves had no coffins in yet—just holes, waiting for coffins.

The gravedigger was two days ahead of schedule. He was a good gravedigger. He was standing under a low bushy tree waiting for me to go. He had a sack over his head and shoulders to keep the rain off his back. I went off to let him get on with his job—

filling in Smiggy's grave. I went to the path and scraped my feet, and walked away up the graveyard. It was all quiet. Smiggy was gone. He wouldn't roll about any more. 'Roll about' was the right expression—that was just what he had done. He had rolled about, poor Smiggy.

He was a hunchback. And a dwarf, I suppose. I'd never thought about him as a dwarf—just as a hunchback. He had short legs and long arms that came past his knees. When he walked, he looked like a thick wheel with thick spokes rolling along. Smiggy rolling about. Poor old Smiggy. Smiggy dead. It seems like he never lived.

I REMEMBER the first time I ever saw Smiggy. It was hot, and I was just a kid. The back lanes were hot and all of the kids were at school. Not me, though. No, sir, not me. Not on a hot day.

I walked all around the place to find some kid to play with. But they were all at school. The tenements were quiet, except for a woman or two and the toddlers. The back lanes were deserted. You could look right up them and they narrowed down to almost nothing, they were so long.

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I walked up the main street that all of the back lanes came out to. But there were no kids. Then I saw one, right up a back lane, curled up on the road like a ball, playing marbles. All kids curl up like balls when they play marbles.

I walked up and up and up, trailing my hand on the wall. But it hurt, because the mortar was fallen out. When I reached the kid I sat down against the wall in the sun. He had six marbles, all good plonkers, which are the best. In his hand he had another six. He knuckled under and shot at the first plonker. It hit, and both marbles jumped, then ran down the road for a yard. They were super plonkers. He knuckled under again, and hit again.

I looked at him, but he wasn't looking back. I saw his hump then. And he was wearing an overcoat. Ever since I knew him after that day he wore an overcoat. Some time before I knew him he didn't wear an overcoat, and once the kids snatched his shirt off to look at his hump. After that, he wore an overcoat, and a waistcoat with a lot of buttons on.

He shot again, and hit again. He did everything slowly and tensed up. He wasn't looking at me, but he knew I was there. I wished he would play me marbles, but I only had one chalky. He had twelve plonkers. Chalkies are no use. Plonkers never play chalkies.

He was a good shot. I'd probably lose my chalky. What was one chalky to lose, anyway? I said: 'Do you want a game, kidder?'

He half-turned his head, but didn't look. He just turned his ear.

I thought he might be deaf, so I said again: 'Do you want a game?' I tried to look around at his eyes, but he turned his ear at me. Ever since I knew Smiggy I've talked to his ear, and he has mumbled back into fresh air.

He nodded and nodded, because he wanted to play.

I put my hand in my pocket. One chalky! He was collecting his plonkers. I took my chalky out and held it for him to see. 'Hey, kid,' I called, and touched his hump for him to see my chalky. But he twisted away and crouched, his head away but his eyes looking, like a goldfish when you turn the bowl around. 'I've just got a chalky.'

He said nothing.

'Do you not want to play now?'

He still said nothing.

'Come on, give us a game.'

Then he started to look around, but when he saw I was looking at him he looked away quickly. 'All right, then,' he said.

'Oh, thanks, kidder,' I said. 'Who lays?'

'I'll lay.'

'Go on, then.'

He laid, and we played. He could play good. But I won a plonker off him. Then he won it back and put it in a bag he had around his neck. Then I won it again, and then another. But he won them back. He couldn't win my chalky, though. He kept laughing and smiling when he won them back. And then he would go all hopeless and lose them. Then he would go all serious and win them back. But he never won my chalky.

I got a bit suspicious. Perhaps he didn't want to win my chalky. I let it get near to him, so that he couldn't miss. But he did miss. I tried again. But he missed. And again. Miss. 'Hi, what is wrong, kid? Do you not like my chalky? Do you not want to win it?'

'What do you mean?' He went all curled up and half-turning.

'I've been watching you. You don't try to win my chalky. Do you not want it?'

'I'm sorry—I didn't want to finish the game. I thought you would go away and leave me if I won your marble.'

'So I would.'

'I would have nobody to play with.'

'The kids will be out of school shortly. Play with them.'

'They don't play with me.'

'Why not?'

'He didn't say anything. I knew then why they didn't play with him.'

'I'll play with you.'

'Will you?'

'Yes.'

'I cannot run, or jump, or play football. I cannot do anything.'

'I can do all of those things. I'll play some things with you. We'll be pals. What's your name?'

'Smiggy'

'Mine is Pete. Come on then, Smiggy. It is time for tea.'

WE went down the lane. I walked. Smiggy rolled. I could look down on him—on his hump and the back of his head. I liked it.

## ME AND SMIGGY

When he wanted to look half-up he had to screw his neck around. I never felt so big in my life. I felt huge. I liked it.

Along the bottom of the back lane kids started to run past. 'School is out, Smiggy.' I couldn't see his face, but I thought he went funny.

More kids ran past. And more. A bunch turned off and came up the lane. They were Smiggy's back lane kids. They stopped over the lane from us, and started to laugh and point. 'Yoo hoo,' they were shouting.

I didn't like this. And I was big next to Smiggy, and straight. I stepped off the kerb, ready for anything. Nobody laughs at me. I shouted: 'What you laughing at?'

They went quiet, and they were scared. They weren't tough, not as tough as my back lane kids. I knew now that they weren't laughing at me. They wouldn't dare—not at me. They were laughing at Smiggy.

I turned and saw him. He was curled up against the wall, like a cat. So that was it. All right, then. I turned to the kids. 'What do you want to make of it?' I shouted.

They were yellow. I jumped at the biggest one and hit him. And they all scattered, like a bunch of marbles when you plonk one of them.

I showed them that day. And when me and Smiggy walked away, boy, it wasn't Smiggy who was to be laughed at. It was them. Not Smiggy—but them. We showed them.

IT was always like that from then on. By golly, yes. Me and Smiggy. I felt good.

We played together from then on. We grew up together. And it was always the same—Smiggy curled up and rolling, me straight up and looking after him.

I took him everywhere. When I played football, Smiggy was on the touchline, not shouting, just watching. But at half-time I would go over to him and talk. That showed them. I let everybody know who carried my coat.

Everywhere I went, Smiggy went. And if anybody laughed, I hit them. I just grew up looking after Smiggy. And the bigger and stronger I grew, the smaller Smiggy seemed to get.

Old Smiggy, he certainly liked the football. I remember first taking him to the big stadium for the big matches. He was so small he could have slipped through the turnstiles.

He was laughing and chattering and jumping, he was so excited. Far above us we could see the walls of the stadium and the heads against the sky. And we could hear the talking and laughing of the men, like a long buzz. I took a box along and Smiggy stood at the back and looked over the men's heads. It was a strain for Smiggy to see, but he managed, on his box.

After that we never missed a match. Smiggy loved it. He loved his football. He knew all of the big footballers. The great Matthews, the dribbler; Milburn, the runner; Lawton, the header. But he had to strain to see from his box. I thought about it a lot. Last week we were standing at the corner and I said: 'We'll see the great Blackpool this week, Smiggy.'

He nodded and grinned.

'The great Matthews on the wing—eh, Smiggy?'

He nodded, excited.

'But you don't see well from the box—eh, Smiggy?'

He shook his head.

'I've been thinking, Smiggy—if I get a piece of rope and tie a piece of wood to it, then we could hook the rope on to the railings at the back of the stadium and you could sit on the wood and have the best view in the ground. How do you like it?'

He nodded. 'Thanks, Pete,' he said. There were tears in his eyes.

I was hell of good to that boy. But I liked it. I felt big and good. 'Don't mention it, Smiggy, boy,' I said.

ON Saturday we were at the stadium early. Half the city was there to see the great Matthews dribble. The crowds poured in. Me and Smiggy were right at the back. I had a hold of a railing. That was for Smiggy when the match started. Nobody else would take it.

I looked down at Smiggy. He was among the boots hurrying past. His overcoat hung on his hump. I could see everything. The crowds were packed together and rolling in a mass like drift-wood. There was chattering and laughing and excitement waiting for the great Matthews. It was a good thing I had a rope for Smiggy. His box would be swept away from him in this crowd. I'd see him through all right.

The pitch was sharp-cut and green and

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marked off for the big match. The band was playing and the ice-cream and peanut vendors were selling fast. I bought Smiggy a bag of nuts.

Then the Blackpool team ran out. There was a roar. Smiggy pulled at my trousers and pointed to the railing.

'Matthews is on the field,' I said.

Smiggy was bubbling over with excitement. 'Put the seat up, put the seat up,' he cried.

I hooked the rope up, and another roar went up. The home team was out.

I hoisted Smiggy up on to his seat and he laughed and waved at the great Matthews. He was the highest man in the stadium, and he was shouting and cheering.

The teams lined up and there was a hush. Smiggy shouted: 'Good old Matthews!'

It went down the crowd, across the pitch, through the stands. The great Matthews heard it. He waved. There was one figure higher than the rest—Smiggy.

The crowd looked. Shouts started, and laughs. More people turned. Everybody turned—and laughed.

Smiggy was curled up, holding on to the

railings with one hand. The other dangled past his feet. His hump was higher than his head. Everybody was laughing, not at me—at Smiggy.

Somebody threw nuts. Then the others threw nuts. The air was full of nuts. Smiggy, the monkey.

I grinned, and Smiggy saw it. But what could I do? They were all laughing—thousands of them. I couldn't help him. He was there by himself. I wasn't even with him. I laughed.

Smiggy was looking at me. But I couldn't help him. I wasn't going to be laughed at. Nobody knew that I was with Smiggy. So I laughed at him.

The tears were streaming down his face. But I couldn't do anything. I laughed and laughed.

Smiggy slid down the railings, and the crowd roared. Smiggy rolled himself away. He never saw the great Matthews dribble.

I NEVER saw Smiggy again. He died two days later. But what could I do?

## The Great Conspiracy

*During the great conspiracy  
They taught me that the world was fair,  
But knowledge was too deep in me.*

*They never told of Adam's tree,  
The Baptist's head, or Samson's hair,  
During the great conspiracy.*

*My eyes were sealed with mystery,  
The seven veils were hung with care,  
But knowledge was too deep in me.*

*Yet tiny thrushes sang their glee,  
And seeds were sprouting everywhere,  
During the great conspiracy.*

*The hidden things I had to see,  
The taboo tree, the apple there,  
For knowledge was too deep in me.*

*Salome danced seductively,  
The apple fell, the tree was bare,  
Ending the great conspiracy,  
Setting my imprisoned knowledge free.*

TOM WRIGHT.

# Sea-Boots and Oilskins

Captain FRANK H. SHAW

**I**N his *Two Years Before the Mast* Richard Henry Dana tells of the shivering dread with which windship crews awaited an all hands call in savage Cape Horn weather. Maybe we old-timers felt less dread than discomfort at such times. Calls of this kind were common enough; we grew case-hardened to the succeeding rigours. So long as a man's sea-boots and oilskins were in good shape, there wasn't anything to be really scared about. 'One hand for yourself and one for the owners' was the working motto in the spacious days of sail.

One steadfast law ruled on shipboard in those near-forgotten days—you could give your only shirt to a messmate, you could halve your payday with him, you could take his best girl out for a night's revelry in his stead, if duty kept him aboard, but not even to your blood-brother would you lend your waterproof gear—boots and slicker.

As I had been the victim of an unscrupulous outfitter during my first experience of the sea, the boots and oilskins supplied were totally unsuited to the work required of them. Only experience taught the tyro what to procure and what to avoid. These protections against cold and wet were the most vital details of a sea-going kit. And the finest oilskin suit I ever owned was made by a Finnish sailmaker from a pair of linen sheets my devoted mother had packed in my sea-chest as I started on my first real voyage.

'What you vant mit sheets?' the craftsman scoffed. I soon found such luxuries redundant. After the first sea was shipped in our half-deck, wet sheets were an agony. Anyway, what chance was there of getting them washed, with the daily allowance of water for all purposes amounting to no more than a gallon per man?

So these superfine sheets were willingly surrendered, and out of them grew an oilskin

coat and trousers that were the envy of all aboard. It is true they were not ready for use until the ship was through the Trades, because the linseed-oil in which they were soaked needed sunshine to dry it; but, that completed, the overalls were sleek as silk, and as waterproof as a diving-suit. And the sailmaker had enough left over to make himself a Baltic smock! But until these garments were wearable, phew, the miseries endured! The outfitter's contribution lacked every quality needful for comfort. The oil was cheap, and the garments stuck together, so that, in tearing them apart, most of the protective stuff was pulled away. And the material below ripped at a mere touch. What with coarsely-dyed dungarees—how that dye irritated the cuts and scratches bred by loose ends of wire!—and high leather sea-boots, with soles as slippery as glass, life was almost unendurable. The moment a wet deck heeled, the raw-headed boy wearing such boots simply slid away uncontrollably into the lee scuppers, and was of no more use to a ship's crew than a sore thumb. The damned things wouldn't render, either at ankle or knee, and it was soon found to be much more merciful to oneself to go bare-webbed, even if the temperature of the in-boarding water—plenty of it—neared freezing-point.

It was my old sea-dad, Morgan, who put me wise as to the correct way of wearing hard-weather clothing. At the beginning I quite naturally tucked the legs of the oilskins into the tops of the sea-boots—and the first green sea to come aboard promptly filled those hideous boots thigh-high. All wrong, of course. Morgan explained that the trousers should be drawn down over the boot-tops and that a rope-yarn lashing should be tightly tied at mid-calf, and other rope-yarns secured around the wrists of the slicker—and that, with a soul-and-body lashing around the waist,

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made a man as snug as a bug in a blanket. You didn't use your sheath-knife belt for this over-all lashing, because, in tumbling about aloft, your knife, on which your life could depend, might fall from its sheath and leave you unable to cut yourself clear from a tangle.

He was right. An all hands call came soon after his tutelage. I dressed accordingly, albeit hastily, since the mate had a habit of waiting at the half-deck door to rouse the last to leave with a savage kick where it was likely to register, and, though the decks were waist-deep in sluicing water, I kept dry as a bone.

As for sea-boots, there was little to be done about them. I slid and slithered helplessly for quite a while, until I learnt a quality of balance that kept me part upright; but those clod-hopping boots were a misery all along, until some genius invented a Scaife sole—discs of rubber protruding through the leather, which permitted a grip on even the most slippery planking. Rubber boots supplied the real solution; but the skipper's slop-chest carried none, and when in port spare cash was so rare that who'd waste it on such comforts when food and fun could be bought?

A difficulty was to keep the leather sea-boots waterproof. Dabbing them had scant effect; slush from the galley harmed them because of the contained salt; tallow might be cadged from the bosun's locker, but he was loth to part with it. Anyway, after standing for a dozen hours in raging water, even the best leather leaked. Except for the Finns' sea-boots. I often envied these North Europeans their footwear, soft and supple as deerskin and as impervious to damp as a hippopotamus's hide. But a Finn regarded his boots with rather more reverence than a Bantu cherishes his pet fetish.

PRACTICALLY half of every voyage, outward and homeward, was spent in this hard-weather clothing. Fine weather in the Trades was devoted to making repairs and renovations in such equipment. Oilskins were scrubbed back to the original material of their construction, thanks to the lavish fresh water of the Doldrums, when the scuppers were plugged and the decks filled knee-deep with the plentiful rain. Once denuded of all the old and disagreeably sticky oil with which they'd been treated, they were dried to a nicety, and then washed over with raw linseed-oil, as many coats as could be cadged—or even

filched—from the paint-locker. It depended on winning the bosun's good favour in the main; no regular issue was made in the starvation windjammers. If a fine spell of hot sunny weather followed the treatment, well and good. Then the oilies dried out as soft and flexible as silken underwear, and were a joy to possess. Otherwise, they became an abomination—glutinous, adhesive, almost obscene. They had no waterproof value of any sort, and kept in the dampness rather than protecting against it.

There was no air-cooled chamber in which to store these outer garments when not in use. They swung on pegs on the bulkhead, and seemed to attract all the offensive smells of their surroundings. Their swish-swish across the bulkhead was the most familiar sound down below when the ship was making heavy weather of it and rolling her rails under. And horribly clammy and soul-quelling they were when the time came to turn out of a self-warmed bunk and don them for active service on deck. Ugh—it sets my teeth on edge to remember those sleepy, shivering scrambles when the all hands call went out, or even when the watch was called. But since, in most cases in real sea-boot and oilskin weather, one plunged into waist-high water immediately on stepping over the weather-sill of the door, always provided you could get that door open against the sheer weight of water jamming its bulk into the door-frame, it didn't really matter; you were so completely miserable that a bit extra hardly counted.

If equipped, however, with really serviceable gear, you could laugh at the worst efforts of those freezing, blusterous storms—even after being more or less immersed for an eight-hour spell. The occasions when I've blessed that ancient sailmaker are innumerable. When, stripping off the protective clothing, and finding oneself bone-dry beneath, one could pity the less fortunate who had to wring out their ordinary clothes before turning in for the brief spell of rest permitted by the raging elements. Yes, the windjammer routine allowed only brief interludes for relaxation. Indeed, boiled down to the bare bones, it meant that a man's continued survival depended to a large extent on the quality of his sea-boots and oilskins. And yet, in the security of a southern port, we often enough pawned this gear at a shocking price, for the sake of securing a few shillings wherewith to buy *real* food, as a change from half-rotten

## SEA-BOOTS AND OILSKINS

salt horse and flint-hard biscuits. And if the skipper proved hard-hearted, as he often did, it meant that you made the homeward passage—round Cape Horn in mid-winter, like as not—bare-webbed and defenceless.

Some windjammer captains made quite a handsome addition to their pay by holding back the contents of their slop-chests—every sailing-ship carried one—until the final passage. They excused themselves on the grounds that most seamen drew all they could from this store of utilities, and then decamped at the first port to be reached. These arguments were to some extent sound. Every sailor got a month's advance of pay on signing articles, as a guarantee; and as the monthly wage was a mere two pounds ten, it meant that after a three months' passage he had less than five pounds to his credit, since tobacco, soap, and matches had been supplied from the moment of his joining ship, to say nothing of underwear, shirts, and dungarees. If, then, a seaman were permitted to take, say, a pair of sea-boots and a suit of oilskins from the ship's general store, he had so small a balance of cash due to him at passage-end that there was little to hold him to the ship; if he deserted, he left practically nothing behind, and could be actually in debt to the ship. He didn't worry as he skipped ship—he was fairly sure of getting a new berth, at an enhanced wage, without too long a wait. Or he had the lure of the gold-diggings or some other shore-job to keep his spirits high.

But on the final passage it was different. The crew wouldn't desert prior to sailing; they had money accumulated to their credit, some sort of a payday at voyage-end was assured. Moreover, since they had probably done as we boys were accustomed to do, and sold their slickers and boots, the price could be put up against them—a price they paid without protest in view of the bleak, bitter Cape Horn rounding that lay ahead of the hurrying ship's bow. That price was not paid in hard cash, it was set off against the final payday, and, since money did not pass, the transaction seemed to cost nothing. Anyway, comfort was preferable to prospective money, which might never be drawn, if the ship went down, as so many did, before completing her voyage.

THIS matter of hard-weather clothing reminds me of a funny incident occurring

in my third voyage as a cadet on the *Dovenby*. One of the boys owned an overcoat—a gorgeous, heavy garment, such as used to be worn by Victorian coachmen in the 'nineties. It reached to the feet, it was voluminous, had a crown-high collar, and possessed all the virtues. Indeed, my shipmate—he ended up as a distinguished naval officer—had confiscated the garment from his father's harness-room, since he had made one world-round voyage and knew the rigours. By general consent this coat was reserved for such boy as had the wheel in cold weather. It became common property in the half-deck, like everything else except sea-boots and oilskins. Being voluminous, it provided snugness even in the harshest blizzard.

But, in Newcastle, New South Wales, we youngsters struck a snag. Before loading our coal-cargo for transit to Chile, the ship lay out in the stream instead of mooring alongside the coal-wharves. The only means of getting ashore was by boat; and an edict was issued from aft forbidding our use of any boat, even the rickety dinghy. Afterguard spite, we called it. The officers had to stay aboard at night, in case an emergency call came to move the ship under the coal-crane. They didn't see why the boys should have privileges. Shore-leave was accordingly forbidden. That tabu made it all the more desirable, needless to say, we being descendants of Eve herself. The embargo fretted us even more than usual when a warm invitation reached me, as senior cadet, to visit a hospitable family ashore. That family possessed at least six very pleasant daughters of ages varying from sixteen to twenty-two. They were what we boys called 'decent girls'—no canoodling nonsense about them. The family desire, as was so often the case in hospitable Australia, was simply to lighten our lot, give us home-like glimpses, a square meal, and some softening companionship.

I went aft and saw the skipper, to tell him of the invitation and to ask a favour—that a boat might be obtainable, to land us and collect us after the festivities. The invitation carried the word 'Dancing' in a corner; and dancing meant a certain amount of sitting-out on a wide, cool verandah, away from the eternal grime of a ship.

Permission was caustically refused. What right had 'them boys' to even the smallest amelioration? We'd stay aboard and like it. That automatically bred a conspiracy. We

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were going to that party if we had to wade through blood to get there. How? We hadn't a penny between us. We hadn't a clean collar, for that matter; but a difficulty of that sort could be overcome by giving wilted neckwear a coat of white paint. Still, boat-hire cost money—quite a lot. Especially the return journey, late at night. It was our final opportunity for a run ashore; once we went under the cranes, we filled up, boarded a pilot, and were towed out to sea, to clean ship and get her in decent trim.

We overhauled our depleted sea-chests, but there wasn't a saleable or negotiable thing remaining—except Skilly's watch-coat. We tossed up a biscuit, lacking a coin, to see whether Skilly should make the great sacrifice—in which all would share, of course—or whether we should kick our futile heels aboard, staring nostalgically at the shore-lights. We could see our friends' house from where we lay, and mighty inviting it showed.

The pantile came down, and Skilly lost. His coat must be sacrificed to make a *Dovenby* holiday! He grinned and bore it. Next, we had to negotiate with a shore boatman. This wasn't as easy as all that. Visitors were not encouraged aboard. The steward, going ashore for provisions, would need a bribe to conduct negotiations, and would probably split to the Old Man, anyhow. But we were painting the ship outside, from stages slung, in some cases, as low as the water's edge. The overcoat was bundled in a scrap of sailcloth and smuggled to the stage of our working life. Next thing was to attract the attention of a passing wherryman without giving the show away to watchful officers on deck. We managed that, though. We slung our stage well under the bows, which formed a screen, and by dint of signals got a boatman into conference. Shown the overcoat, he hesitated. He'd rather have money. We told him a fairy story about its honest-to-goodness value. He reluctantly melted. Right-ho! In return for that so-precious garment he volunteered to hang under the fiddle-bow at a designated hour after dark fell and work ceased.

We made our preparations, got our collars in shape, borrowed a necktie or two from the fo'c'sle, tried to get the salt-white from our go-ashore shoes—in vain—and brushed our shabby uniforms. A rum lot of scarecrows we looked—not one of us had had a haircut for a couple of months. Why waste honest money on such unnecessary luxuries! But we knew

our friends ashore wouldn't be too critical.

At the appointed time we went for'ard, as if to join the forehatch singsong. Kind darkness hid our festival garb. We stowed our badge-caps in our pockets. I stole to the fo'c'sle-head—yes, the promised boat awaited us there, its owner hanging to the cable. He whispered to lower the coat down, which was done. That was O.K. I dropped a rope's-end over the bow from the apron, and passed the word. We stealthily slid down one at a time. We'd made it! The boatman sculled almost silently away, and, throbbing with agreeable anticipation, we made the land.

After that it was easy. Who was likely to question a handful of uniformed boys stepping briskly along the road? The friendly house was aglow with lights when we reached it. Music was to be heard. And past experience had taught us that there'd be a feast to delight all the senses—to ever-hungry boys the greatest attraction of all, though I'm ashamed to admit it.

I knocked on the front-door. It was opened by our kind hostess. 'Now, isn't it nice to see you boys!' she exclaimed. 'Come in, all of you. And Captain Fegan will be so surprised to see you; he said he didn't think you could be spared to come ashore!'

Yes, our own malign Fegan! But for soft society he'd have skinned us alive, I'm sure. He glared lightnings at us, and thunderously ordered us back aboard at once. But the eldest daughter made sweet intercession. It was a shame, she said, not being scared of the autocrat, as we were, that the poor exiled boys couldn't have an evening's enjoyment. So we were reluctantly allowed to stay for supper and fun and games, but Fegan's face promised us unutterable things once he had us safely aboard again, and the evening wasn't as pleasurable as it might have been. There were other skippers there, but the Dowling girls favoured us bachelor boys. However, the supper left nothing to be desired, and the dancing equalled it. Before our tyrant was ready to leave—he was drinking whisky with our host—he ordered us back aboard. The girls accompanied us part-way to the landing-place, promising intercession with Fegan. But we knew him too well to believe it would be of the slightest use.

And the wherryman was faithless to his trust. No sign of him appeared. We hadn't a bean to hire another. We could not swim off in our uniforms except as a last resort.

## THE REAL JORDAN

We sat on the bollards and bewailed our fate, until Fegan, slightly intoxicated, showed up with a mob of his fellow-skippers: He laughed at our plight, and told us a night out wouldn't do us any harm; but another skipper, less stony-hearted, called a boat and paid the man and told him to put us aboard. I'll draw a veil over what eventually happened. We were dressed down, almost flayed alive, and put to menial jobs by way of learning our lesson. And two days later, just as we hove alongside, a registered letter containing five precious pounds came to me from my considerate

father. Too late. I found the defaulting boatman and offered to buy back the watch-coat, even at the price of my windfall. He'd pawned it as we trudged to the Dowlings' and got drunk on the proceeds. So we had to content ourselves with lashings of grub from a bum-boat, and we went round the Horn shivering, blue-skinned, and wholly miserable. But it was a good evening, nevertheless.

Modern sailors don't know the value of sea-boots and oilskins! They seldom get their feet wet, and there's always shelter from the weather.

## The Real Jordan

### NELSON THORPE

FIRST impressions of great waterways, famous in song and story, are apt to prove disappointing. There was, for instance, that sudden unexpected glimpse of the classic Tiber. Was it on the banks of this blustering yellowish stream that a mighty empire had grown up? And then—the 'Beautiful Blue Danube'! Surely the man who first coined that description must have been colour-blind.

Nor can we except from this list of disappointments the world's most sacred river, the Jordan—for the Jordan, save for certain beauties in its upper reaches, is a shallow, restless, muddy stream, squirming its fussy way through jungles of rank vegetation and arid plains, forsaken by man and beast, to an ignominious end in the Dead Sea.

The river's appearance is dirty and unwholesome. Where are the limpid depths? Where are the 'crystal waters sweet'? And yet it was in this stream that Naaman, the Syrian leper, dipped seven times 'and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child.' How can these things be?

The question rises naturally in the mind of the traveller. Was this the river known to

Christ and his disciples? Has its physical aspect changed through the centuries, in common with so much of the Holy Land? Or were its beauties exaggerated, quite unconsciously, by Biblical writers whose world was set on a small stage, rendering them incapable of making a comparison with the rivers of other lands?

SUCH a question is not easy to answer. We have to admit that the Jordan was not highly regarded by the ancient Hebrew poets, who compared it unfavourably with the clear streams of Damascus and Lebanon. Even so, it is not unreasonable to infer that its aspect has changed for the worse since that far day when John the Baptist baptised Jesus in its waters.

Volcanic disturbances have continually disrupted the bed of the river from the earliest times. Its course has been blocked, its rivulets diverted and transformed into stagnant pools, and the abundant slime deposits on its banks greedily caught up and absorbed by the rapid current. The heat upon the surface is at

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all times unbearable, which is only to be expected from a river that pursues practically its entire course below sea-level.

The Jordan, having forced its way across the Sea of Galilee, emerges thence a tolerably clear stream. Then, however, it begins its tortuous passage through the confined Jordan Valley, gathering as it proceeds quantities of grey marl, rotting vegetation, and poisonous chemical products. These it finally discharges into the Dead Sea, that awful expanse in which no fish can live and no human body sink.

It was this particular portion of the river, be it remembered, that was Christ's Jordan and the scene of his ministrations, not the upper reaches where pollution has not set in and where lie the beauty spots. Seen from the air, the hallowed Jordan looks less like a silver thread than a slimy green serpent coiled among the desolate plains.

**W**HATEVER changes two thousand years may have wrought in the physical aspect of the Jordan, of one thing we can be certain—the scene along its banks was a widely different one in apostolic times from what it is to-day. Where now desolation reigns was once palpitating human activity.

Nothing in the Holy Land leaves a deeper impression on the mind of the traveller than the first sight of the Lake of Galilee. Quite apart from its sacred associations, it has a beauty of its own—the beauty of abiding peace. A huddle of flat white roofs constitutes the melancholy remnant of ancient Tiberias. A single small fishing-boat, perhaps, drifts lazily across the blue surface of the lake. Beyond that, no suggestion of life.

*O Sabbath rest by Galilee!  
O calm of hills above!*

exclaims the beholder.

Nevertheless, if the traveller comes away with the idea that Christ spent his days in Wordsworth-like meditation on the borders of a lonely lake he would be cherishing a complete delusion. Exactly the reverse is the case. In Christ's day the place was a populous centre. Around the shores were at least eight important towns, which in a stretch

of water only thirteen miles long hardly suggests solitude.

All these towns had temples and palaces, theatres and hippodromes, aqueducts and public baths, colonnaded streets and palm-groves—all those luxuries of civilisation, in fact, which the amazing Romans introduced wherever they settled. Perched aloft on the western shore was the magnificent palace of Herod Antipas, standing sentinel over the town which the despot had named in honour of the Emperor Tiberius.

The Lake of Galilee was itself a recognised fishing-ground, the catches being exported to every part of Palestine. Weaving, tent-making, and boatbuilding were among the local industries carried on round its shores. Independent of the native population, there was a large luxury settlement, consisting mostly of wealthy Romans who inhabited the hillside towns overlooking the lake.

Gadara, the scene of the stampede of the Gadarene swine, was one of these luxury spas, renowned for its baths and hot medicinal springs. 'Thither', says the historian Strabo, 'came the pleasure-loving Romans to enjoy the hot springs and solace their leisure with the plays performed in the theatres.' What a very different picture this conjures up of the Christ environment from the conventional one held by the untravelled Bible reader.

Even without its religious associations, the Jordan would claim our attention, if only on account of its remarkable sinuosities. It is surely the world's most winding river. Its bewildering twistings and turnings almost suggest that Nature, in one of her most freakish moods, was out to produce a kind of fluvial corkscrew. The distance, for example, between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea is, as the crow flies, not more than sixty miles. Yet it takes the Jordan two hundred miles to get from one to the other!

Nevertheless, among the streams of the earth the Jordan stands alone. It is the sacred river. It was Christ's river, selected above all others to witness his miracles and the incidents of his everyday life. Still, as ever, it presses its relentless course towards the Dead Sea. The lion no longer lurks in its jungles, but the flock still feeds peacefully along its banks.



## Unlimited Liability

MAURICE WALSH

### II

[I—Thomasheen James O'Doran, man-of-no-work, successfully touches his employer, the teller of the story, for a loan for an unspecified project to be conducted by himself and his friends Davy Hand and Ned Lowry.]

IN due time I went after the woodcock in the Wicklow hills. The brown birds had come drifting in with the waxing October moon, and would not linger for any man's convenience. I borrowed my wife's car as usual.

'Four days,' I said, 'and I can be reached by phone at the Glenview Hotel. Have the ice-box empty, and I'll fill it for you.'

'Two brace—I never get more!' she derided. Let me say here that she got her two brace, and two and two more.

Before I set out a thought struck me that should have struck me earlier. I rang up my good friend Joe O'Dowd. Joe is Detective Inspector to the Dublin C.I.D., a smart officer, a keen sportsman, and an honest man besides. 'The cock are in, Joseph,' I told him. 'Have you four days to spare?'

'Damn, oh damn!' came his southern voice feelingly. 'I've a job on that won't wait. I know! I know! You can't wait either, be-

cause the birdeens won't.' His voice grew interested. 'Where do you try first?'

'Inland from the Glen of the Downs.'

He chuckled. 'Keep your eyes skinned, and you might see me—if I don't see you first. Good luck, and a stiff left arm.'

From this I gathered that Joe had a job on in Wicklow—probably a case of sheep-stealing, for some Wicklow mountaineers would rather lift a wether than rear one.

THIS is not a chronicle of three days amongst the woodcock. I need only say that the birds were in the furze, and that I had two good days with them. The weather was fine and fragilely brilliant. The brown hills, filmed with the fading purple of the heather, lifted and heaved and folded about me; and the furze still sported a golden bloom. 'When the furze is out of bloom kissing will be out of fashion.'

There was scarcely a draw of air, and the brown birds stayed in cover until flushed by Lum ranging and springing close in front of me. That made for good shooting, and for once my eye was in. Also, I got a brace of

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grouse sixty yards out. Two good days indeed.

Lum, black and white markings, is supposed to be a true springer, but I think he has a trace of the Irish water-spaniel in him somewhere, for he is resolute and tireless and, unlike most spaniels, completely fearless. He had two good days, too.

Two good days! But the third was not so good. A wersh breeze lifted out of the north-eastern sea, and kept on lifting—the very breeze to send the woodcock south and west as far as the coast of Cork and Kerry. I found that out early on. But I persisted greedily, for I was within reach of a record three-day bag. So I went on, my back to the breeze, and in the airt ahead of me lay ten, twenty miles of uninhabited moor and mountain.

Sometime in the afternoon Lum and I shared our sandwiches by the rushy margin of a hill tarn, and while the dog lapped water daintily I savoured my last dram of pot-still whiskey.

I considered turning back at that point, but I was lured on by the slope of a hill nicely clumped with furze and bracken. I had two birds in my bag, and wanted only two more. I did not get them. But, still, I went on into a welter of low hills as directionless as a choppy sea.

I was trapped almost without warning. I was still in the pallid sunlight, and the first intimation I got was a feather of mist brushing by my shoulder. I swung round at once. High up, the sky was still clearly blue, but low over the hills and hollows came pouring a thick and eddying band of silver-grey sea-haar, that clinging fog out of the north-east that might blow over in an hour, or in twenty-four. One minute I was in clear sunlight, the next I was wrapped in a grey opaqueness, and the dank chill of it was in my throat. Visibility was cut down to twenty paces.

I did not know this jumble of hills particularly, and I certainly was not sure how many miles I was inland from the Glen of the Downs. All I knew was that I must get out of this terrain as quickly as possible—and that might not be quick at all.

I called Lum to heel, faced into the north-east, and set out to, more or less, retrace my steps. If the breeze held true, and daylight lasted, I must ultimately get into the known lowlands somewhere. But, with the wind veering to the contours, it was not easy to keep facing one way, and the folds of the little

hills kept turning me clockwise and widder-shins bewilderingly. Once I had to turn right back out of a gully that steepened unclimbably.

In about an hour I began to wonder if I had not twisted the compass through sixty degrees, and the fog had grown denser. In another hour I decided that I was just about lost; but I kept pegging away hoping to strike a hill-track that would lead me to a public road.

I found no track. And then night closed in, the breeze died away, the fog folded down more closely, and I knew that I was marooned till the arrival of the dawn—and surely the dawn would come again even in an atomic age.

I was in no great danger, if I kept my head; and I was old and practised enough not to lose it. I knew the fog technique in dangerous terrain at night: if there's a little visibility move foot over foot in a chosen direction, and keep your ears open; if the visibility is nil, don't move at all. There were plenty of dangerous spots in these hills. The cliffs about Loch Dan and Tay and Luggielaw would do a perfect job on me, and I did not know how near I was to any of them.

I chose a boss of heather, sat down deep in it, unloaded my gun, filled a pipe and lit it with three matches, and pulled patient old Lum between my knees. The loose ruff of his neck was warm to my hands. We were wet and tired and hungry, but we could last out for ten or twelve hours and make no claim to fortitude.

After half a pipe I noted that the night was not dead dark, for I could see the smoke of my pipe blend with the drift and eddies of fog. There was a waxing moon somewhere. And also I noticed that the drift of mist was not uniform. It went by in swathes and folds, and sometimes I could see for some dozen yards along the hollow.

As a fairly useful hillman, I took advantage of these comparatively clear periods. While they lasted, I shuffled watchfully forward in a direction I hoped was easterly. This slow motion helped to stay the chill in my bones, and gave me an interest in fighting the fog on its own ground.

So I moved and rested for an hour or more, eyes keenly ahead, and ears alert for the sound of running water or the eerie whistle of a breeze on a cliff face. In time I came to a little runlet murmuring in the heather, and followed it round a wide curve. And, suddenly, I stopped dead, shut my eyes, and beheld a vision.

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IT was my nose that induced that vision. There was a pervading scent in the air that I knew of old, and the vision was etched sharply in my mind. Again I saw a shallow wooded glen below rolling moors not far from the Spey in the Highlands, and above the trees stood the chimney-stalks and pagoda-kilns of one, two, four malt-whisky distilleries. A blue drift of peat-smoke lazèd down the valley, and with it came that all-pervading scent. There was in it the tang of peat, the sweetness of malt-mash, the sourness of spent wash, the pungent dryness of impure spirit. And they were all here, now, this very minute, in a little Wicklow valley, held under by the fog. A still at work?

But there was no distillery in Wicklow, I told myself, and at once qualified that—no licensed distillery, I meant. But what about an illicit distillery running poteen or moonshine? Well, there were fastnesses in the Wicklow hills where an unlicensed still might run jeopardously for a season and make a killing. And I was satisfied that one was running here in this little valley. What then?

I considered that carefully, and, suddenly, I knew how cold and wet and weary and hungry I was. Any port in a storm! And I might find it by following my nose.

Was it a port of danger? Hardly. The men that took to poteen-making in the wilds were sporting men by most standards—good honest men like the smugglers of old, combining business with adventure, playing a profitable but risky game against authority, and evading a tax that was grossly penal and iniquitous—or so they held.

Lum's nose was in the hollow of my knee, and he was whuffing. He, too, was getting a scent that was neither of bird nor beast.

'All right, boy,' I murmured. 'Let's follow our nose, and take a chance.'

There was another brief thinning of the fog, and I moved forward foot over foot among the grass tussocks. Presently the faint sough of cascading water came to my ears. The fumes were getting stronger too, so I was on the right road. I was looking for a glow of light ahead, but I saw none.

And then Lum growled.

'Beggars not choosers, Lum!' I said. 'Mind your manners.'

And then Lum barked. A bark not of warning, but of inquiry. And the inquiry was answered. A quiet voice spoke out of the fog in front of us. 'Stand where you are.'

There was a cadence in that voice that I should have recognised. I stood where I was, and kept my voice quiet too. And brevity is the soul of more than wit. 'I was out after cock, and got lost in the fog. That is all.'

The voice of the invisible deepened in the uttermost awe. 'Holy Jeroosalam! Sir—sir—sir! Is it your own self in this bloody place and hour?'

'My own self, Mr Ned Lowry,' I said. 'How is business?'

Light surely flooded in on me. I had jumped to the wrong conclusion weeks ago, but now I knew, and was master of the situation.

Feet swished through the heather, and a figure loomed close. The strong-boned face of Ned Lowry was only a blur, but I knew my man. His voice hesitated. 'This—is this is bad, sir. This is dam' bad entirely.'

'Yes, Ned. I was supposed not to know,' I said easily, and grasped the rough tweed of his sleeve. 'Dam' bad is it? Not on your life, brother! Listen, Ned. I spent fifteen years amongst the Highland stills, and I know. You are running poteen right here and now, and don't deny it.'

'And what harm is that, sir?' said the man from Mayo.

'None in your code, and it is no business of mine now or later.' I put rasp in my voice. 'You are not going to refuse me shelter, are you?'

His arm shook under my hand. 'Holy Lord, sir, is that what you think of me? Sure, the whole place is yours, and oughtn't I to know you'll take a sensible view of—of everything? Let me take a hould of you—"tisn't far.'

He hooked my arm firmly, bent aside to pat Lum, and led confidently up the stream.

There was still no glow or gleam of light, but we had not far to go. The sound of cascading water was closer, and then I could see the sliding glimmer of it through the fog on my left. We edged round the wet fronds of a stunted birch, and brought up within hand-reach of a steep little slope clothed heavily with old heather. I could see no way out or over. Ned Lowry's chuckling whisper was in my ear. 'Begod, sir, you'll frighten 'em out of a year's growth.'

His hand went out, and a cloak of what seemed to be heather moved aside. The glow, the warmth, and the fumes hit me in the face. I was looking into the glow through a narrow

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archway of rough stones. Ned gave me a quick nudge, and I stepped into a thick warmth that was soothing as warm water.

'God save all here!' I gave the customary salute.

'And you, too, sir,' said Ned at my shoulder. 'And welcome you are.' No one else said anything.

I FOUND myself in quite a spacious room, with a stamped-clay floor. It was really a cave, half-natural and half-artificial, gouged out of the hillside, close by a cascade pouring down from the higher hills. The rear part was roofed by the primal granite of Wicklow, and the front was beamed with twisted bog-pine under a matting of peat-sods. At the back a low aperture half-covered by a hanging sack led into blackness. The only furnishings were a few rough chairs and creepy stools, and there was a tumble of bedding—sacks and old blankets—by the right wall. The light was provided by a kitchen-lamp hanging from a bog-pine collar-brace.

At the left side was a huge open fireplace, and a low fire of peat smouldered on the hearth. The smoke drifting upwards would be lost outside in the spray from the waterfall.

Resting on two granite bosses over the low fire was an immense iron pot. But it was no ordinary pot. It was a pot-still. From the centre of the close-fitting lid projected a round copper pipe, that rose straight up for two feet, and then curved steeply down to disappear in a tall wooden barrel. A lead pipe came through the side wall, and poured a thin trickle of cooling water into the open head of the barrel, and another stream poured from a pipe at the base into a runlet under the wall. The whole set-up was primitive, but thoroughly efficient. Primitive, indeed, for it had come down from prehistory.

The final result flowed from a small copper nozzle—the end of the worm—near the base of the barrel. It was a thin trickle of crystal-clear liquid tinkling into an earthenware jar—the final condensation that was raw poeteen, that illicit spirit full of fire and seduction.

And, acrouch on a straw hassock, his knees embracing the earthenware jar, brooded the acolyte attending the apotheosis of the spirit. And that acolyte was none other than Davy Hand, my Dublin Jackeen. Though the place was comfortably warm, his black overcoat was buttoned tightly over his round paunch,

and his bowler-hat was firmly down to his ears.

As I entered, he turned a quick head, and an amazed startle came into his eyes. Then he turned away, to crouch closer to the jar, and his shoulders lifted to hide his dropped head. He was the stillman utterly engrossed in his task. He extended a reverent hand, touched middle-finger to the trickle from the nozzle, savoured it on his tongue, and nodded portentously. Yes, the spirit was still up to standard, but only just. It must be watched carefully, and no dreadful visitation out of the night dare interfere to spoil the run.

That did not help Davy Hand. I walked softly across to him, and rammed his hat down over the bridge of his nose. He squeaked like a rabbit, and nearly kicked over the earthenware jar. 'Oh blazes, sir!' he protested, levering at his hat. 'What did I ever do to you? Couldn't you lay the blame where it belongs?'

'I will,' I said, and swung round. Ned Lowry was grinning just inside the entrance, and, other than he and Davy, there was no one in the place that I could see. I looked toward the black cavity in the back wall. 'Where, then, is company promoter Mr T. J. O'Doran, Esquire?' I inquired.

There was no need to ask, for my dog Lum supplied the information. Lum is a one-man dog, but I sometimes wonder if Thomasheen James is not the man. Lum was over at the pile of bedding, nose forward, and his stump of tail and hindquarters wagging ecstatically.

I went across soft-footed, moved Lum aside, traced an outline with my eye, and administered a satisfactory root with the side of a heavy shooting-boot. The bedding erupted explosively. Thomasheen James shot upwards, his arms flailing aside sacks and blankets, and his voice bellowing. 'Davy Hand, is that the way to wake a man? Gie me a hoult o' your windpipe—Oh, Goramighty!'

His jaw dropped, and the whites of his eyes showed. The scoundrel must have been asleep after all, for his surprise was genuine beyond any make-believe. He moaned in the back of his throat, and put a sheltering forearm across his eyes. The forearm was bare, and a memento of his naval service, a plump mermaid was tattooed on it in red and blue.

'Oh heavens, me bed!' he made piteous complaint. 'Oughtn't I ha' known it from the day I was borned? If I was to hide meself under the mountains at the final ind of the

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unknown world, he'd draw me out of it like a pennywinkle on the point of a pin, an' accuse me first thing as a false pritinder. But maybe I'm wrong. 'Tis still dramin' I am, an', barrin' the devil himself, he's not there at all.' He lowered his forearm for a peep, and jerked it up again. 'Gor! I must be asleep still.'

I knocked his arm down smartly. 'False pretender is right,' I said. 'You unnamed son of a nameless polecat!'

'Them's his words, ghost or no ghost,' he proclaimed, stepped back hastily, tangled in a sack, and came erect again. He looked at me closely now, blinked his eyes rapidly, thrust his head forward, and change came over his face and voice. 'In the name o' sin, what was you doin' to yourself? Goramighty! You're ruined beyond all repair!'

No doubt I was bedraggled enough. My old hat was hanging about my ears, my Donegal tweeds were beaded with moisture, and the chill in my bones must be showing in my face.

I FLATTER myself that Thomasheen James, deep down, has a real affection for me, though he pretends it is purely selfish. More than once he has said: 'What the devil in hell would happen me, an' you growin' daisies?'

He flung his arms wide. 'You're here, anyhow, no matter what hell you came out of, and the right thing will be done on you. Gie me a hout of you!'

He leaped at me, wrested away my gun, broke it, like a true sportsman, to make sure it was unloaded, and laid it on the bedding. 'I'll attend to that later on,' he said. He flicked my hat off and set it to steam on the hob. 'Bend your stiff neck'—and the game-bag was in his hands. He looked inside. 'As I thought—two for the long day, and one of 'em grey as Mathooslam!' He was round behind me, and my wet jacket was being levered off shoulders and arms. He felt my sleeves. 'A sound bit o' tweed,' he said. 'It kept the wet off your hide. Sit over here be the fire.'

I found myself in a rush-bottomed chair. My boots and socks were off, and my cold feet patting the delicious warmth of the hearth-stone. A glow flowed through me, and it was mental as well as physical. I was amongst friends, and I was being ministered unto. Davy Hand was holding an egg-cup under my nose. 'The exact strength to be taken nate!'

he said. 'Down with it, sir, and another to follow!'

An egg-cup is the traditional tasting utensil for poteen. I smelt the seductive feintness of the warm liquor, and drank it traditionally, not sipping or savouring, but tossing it straight down my gullet, and I was so empty that I thought I heard the liquid cry 'Clink' against the pit of my stomach. Fire poured down my alimentary canal, and water came into my eyes.

Ned Lowry shoved a big aluminium cooking-pot into the flank of the fire, and an odour seeped from beneath the lid that made my mouth water uncontrollably. 'Make yourself at home now, me dear friend,' he said warmly. 'Sure, the night is only beginning.'

Yes, to be brief, we made night of it. We were gathered here in a cosy mountain den, and we were bound to make a night of it. The last run of the first period of distillation was dripping into the jar, and the success of that operation called for a celebration. So we celebrated.

We, Lum included, fed on a gourmet stew, comprising potatoes, onions, and mountain mutton—and whose was the sheep I did not inquire. In the pauses we downed egg-cups of neat liquor after the manner of aquavit, and finally regaled ourselves with a beverage of hot milk generously laced with poteen, a most insidious concoction that called for repetition—at least twice.

And surely we talked. I held forth on the doubtful morality of making and purveying poteen to the loss of revenue, and the degradation of *homo sapiens*. Ned Lowry countered with the iniquity of a penal duty so enormous that plain Irishmen could not afford to enjoy the liquor that ancient Irishmen had perfected and made world famous—the drink for manly men everywhere. I pointed out the risk of illicit distillation so near the metropolis and C.I.D. headquarters. Like true gamblers, they held that the game was worth playing, and that the profits were worth a bit of a risk, anyway.

They intended to run six periods to a total of say three hundred gallons of potable spirits. Already they had stored away through the hole in the wall some forty gallons in two quarter-casks, and they counted upon netting a clear thousand pounds—a very nice reward for a winter's pastime. Thomasheen James was particularly eloquent on the 'absolute dead-sure sartinty of the refundment of all

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capital levies and a tarnation dividend besides.'

Finally, as all Irishmen must, we got to the song and poetry stage. Ned Lowry in a strong baritone gave us a nostalgic ballad called 'The County of Mayo'. Davy Hand gave us 'Down by the Liffey-side' in purest adenoidal Dublinese. Thomasheen James, growing lachrymose, lifted a tuneful tenor in a sad old convict song:

*Last night when I lay down in chains  
I had a pleasant dream.  
I dreamt I was in Ireland  
Down by the Shannon stream.  
I dreamt I was in Ireland,  
My true love hand in hand,  
But when I woke, my heart it broke,  
In far Van Diemen's Land.*

I, being tuneless, recited a poem in Braid Scots:

*O Jean, my Jean, when the bell ca's the  
congregation  
Owre valley an' hill wi' the ding frae its iron  
mou',*

*When a'body's thocht is set on his ain sal-  
vation,*

*Mine's set on you.*

And so on.

Ned Lowry, all the time, kept control of the situation. Time and again he slipped out into the night to look over the ground, and returned to tell us that the fog was thick as ever.

Weariness overwhelmed me all too soon. The long tramp, the murky warmth of the still-house, the big meal, to say nothing of poteen punch, weighed me down. Almost without knowing it I found myself supine amongst the bedding, and Thomasheen James throwing a blanket lightly over me. I have a hazy recollection of Ned Lowry and his myrmidons unscrewing the worm and lid, emptying the spent lees into the drainage runnel, removing the still from the fireplace, and filling it with cold water—and after that oblivion.

(To be concluded.)

[1903] A.C.

*Human Interest in Law Reports*

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## NICHOLAS LANE

SOLICITORS, barristers, judges, and law students turn to the Law Reports as the repository for much of the law of the land. They can trace precedents there, and appreciate, as they read, this and that subtlety of reasoning; but the layman seldom wishes to follow them in their reading.

Yet in all those volumes there is a wealth of human interest tucked away. The Reports include only such cases as have legal importance, and those cases are not reported in the manner of the popular press—the law is set out, the passions which had been roused are largely ignored. But before the law can be

expounded the facts of each case must be given, and through the chilly recital sound echoes of disputes long forgotten, preserved in this improbable place. Any volume of any of the different series of reports is full of this kind of desiccated romance. The one which gives this article its theme and its title, the *Appeal Cases Reports* for 1903, is a random choice. It was taken down from the shelf for a particular purpose; that purpose served, the pages were idly turned.

Appeal cases include those heard by the House of Lords and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council—cases before the Court

of Appeal are reported elsewhere; and as the House of Lords hears appeals from Scotland as well as from the United Kingdom, and as the jurisdiction of the Privy Council extends to all Her Majesty's territories overseas except Eire, Canada, India, Pakistan, and South Africa, which have now dissociated themselves from it, the range of 'A.C.' is an extensive one.

Not that all the matters brought within its scope are of great substantial interest. The most trivial quarrel may loom large enough in its protagonists' minds to warrant the long and costly journey to the House of Lords or to the undramatic room in Whitehall where the Judicial Committee sits. For instance, in our chosen volume, 'for more than forty years without interruption the owner of a house used a cart way from his stables through the yard of an adjoining inn to the public road, paying each year 15s. to the owners of the inn yard. There was no agreement in writing . . .' but, when notice to terminate the use was served, sufficient indignation was generated to take the case to the House of Lords. The High Court had found a right of way established, the Court of Appeal reversed their judgment by a 2-1 majority, and the House of Lords was unanimous in dismissing the appeal. That 15s. rent was fatal: no 'right' of way existed if rent was paid for it.

A fortnight after the hearing of that case the House was concerned with another domestic matter. A policeman when he retired was receiving 39s. weekly, 32s. being the ordinary pay of his rank and 7s. for special duty which he had performed for five years at the House of Lords. It may well have been that their Lordships hearing the case knew the man himself. The question for decision was whether the 7s. formed part of his pay for the calculation of his pension. With some regret the House felt bound to hold that it did not, for the weekly pay-sheets which the constable had had to sign showed the 32s. under 'Amount of Pay', and the 7s. under 'Allowance for Special Duties'. By signing the sheets in this form the constable had contracted out of the right to claim the allowance as pay.

A little later in the year came a nice example of the uncertainties of litigation. This was a question of the licence of a beerhouse. Fourteen years earlier there had been a break of two days in the continuity of the licence,

which otherwise had been continuous for more than thirty years. The technical question turned on the two days' break, and whether in the circumstances the licensing magistrates could refuse to renew the licence. The magistrates *had* refused it, and on appeal Quarter Sessions upheld them. A Divisional Court held that the licence should be granted, the Court of Appeal by a 2-1 majority held that it should not. The last word, in the House of Lords, was that it should; two judges and the magistrates had said 'No', eight had said 'Yes'.

A few pages turned, and the subject is quite different. The House is now sitting as a Committee for Privileges, and the question is of a peerage. More than half-a-century before, a gentleman had married, and almost immediately after the marriage was informed by his wife that she was going to have a child by another man. He separated from her immediately, and never again lived with her. Some time later he succeeded to the family earldom, and later still, after the death of his first wife, married again and had issue. Upon his death a claim to the earldom was made by the son of the first wife, and the House now had to decide whether the deposition which had been made as to these facts by the Earl himself was legitimate evidence. It was held that it was, and the claim failed.

THESE were all English cases, but as the year is 1903 and the dissociation mentioned above had not yet taken place, there are others from Scotland and Ireland, from Canada, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand. . . . There was the case of the snow in Montreal. The city council was the road authority, and as such was bound to remove snow and ice from the streets; but the Montreal Street Railway Company had contracted to keep their own track clear. In the earlier days of horse power 'no attempt was ever made . . . to keep the track of the railway open in winter. The company used sleighs as everybody else did.' The snow accumulated, beaten down by the traffic, and was cleared only when the spring thaw began. But with the coming of electricity it became possible, 'by means of electrical cars furnished with rotary brushes always ready', to keep the track permanently open—and that meant a ditch for the trams running between the eighteen-inch banks of snow on the road itself. Was the

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tramway company liable for the expenses of clearing the rest of the streets of the snow they threw on to them? On the facts, the Judicial Committee said 'No'.

In most of the Privy Council cases the setting is just a little more picturesque than any we can produce at home. Even if it is no more than a matter of names, the colour is there. In a case from Ontario, for instance, concerning certain lands 'surrendered by the Indians by the treaty of October 3, 1873, known as the North-West Angle Treaty', the precise location—Sultana Island, in the Lake of the Woods—carries the reader through space and time to the books of his boyhood. Another case was concerned with railway construction and compensation in Cape Colony. The track went through a farm called De Draai Farm, while a station had been built at Touws River—and the mind wanders off to the early days of Sir Winston Churchill and the late General Smuts.

But the Dominions cases have as much substantive interest as those from nearer home. We find a naturalised Japanese claiming to be placed on the register of voters in Vancouver. There is argument about Lord's Day observance in Ontario. And in this particular volume it is in a Privy Council hearing that we find the demonstration, never wanting for very long, of the quality that should be our main cause for pride in our legal system. Even the most casual reader of the reports must occasionally glance at the matters of law involved in the decisions, and he may often be impatient with what appears to be hair-splitting logic, and on occasion remoteness from reality. Then he comes on a decision which makes him think again.

In 1848 certain Maori chiefs ceded 500 acres of land to the Bishop of New Zealand for the building of a college to promote religion. The Crown had approved the plan, and had waived any rights it might have had to the land. But the college was not built, and the

accumulation of rent now made a considerable sum. The trustees submitted for the approval of the New Zealand court a scheme for the expenditure of the accumulated funds. Then the New Zealand Government intervened, claiming that as the original purpose of the grant had failed the land had reverted to the Crown. In the courts of New Zealand this claim met with considerable success.

The opinion of the Judicial Committee was delivered by Lord Macnaghten, and is worth the attention of everyone who values the independence of the courts. 'What has the Court to do with the executive?' asked their Lordships rhetorically. 'Where there is a suit properly constituted and ripe for decision, why should justice be denied or delayed at the bidding of the executive? . . . In the opinion of their Lordships [the Solicitor-General for New Zealand] has been wrong in every step from first to last . . .' This is clearly the spirit in which tyranny is best resisted.

**G**REAT issues of principle go to these highest courts, and smaller things, too—the will bequeathing property to X, 'if he marries a fit and worthy gentlewoman'; the slippery surface of the Dublin tram-tracks; the copyright in the picture 'What we have, we'll hold'; the liabilities of members of private clubs; the responsibility for City lighting (until 1897) of the Commission of Sewers of the City of London; other will cases, so involved that to understand them properly the reader has to write out small family trees, and so on. All in one volume. A novel containing such diversity of interest would be overcrowded, and it may be worth repeating that all the 'stories' in this article are in fact from [1903] A.C.

There would be little point in recommending the Law Reports for general lay reading, but when opportunity offers there is much to repay judicious sipping.

## Fireside Thanks

*To Him be thanks whose love did bless  
This world of ours with weariness  
And gave men skill to use such tools  
As fashion slippers, pipes, and stools!*

CHARLES KELLIE.

# Records Are Making Records

T. S. DOUGLAS

MAKERS of gramophone-records in Britain report that their sales during the last year have increased by from twenty to seventy per cent and are still rising. It is believed that total sales are now running at about 4,500,000 a month, or one new record a year for every man, woman, and child in the country. About 400,000 new radiograms and record-players of various kinds were sold last year. Recently a British company paid over £3,000,000 for a Hollywood record company, one of the largest dollar investments made by British industry since the war.

These figures illustrate the astonishing boom in recorded music during the last few years. With the coming of broadcasting, there were plenty of people ready to forecast the decline of the gramophone. Music being available all day at the turn of a switch, people, they argued, would not be bothered to put on gramophone-records and go to the expense of buying them. In fact, people continued to buy rather more records. Many hearing a record broadcast once bought it to play themselves. Broadcasting educated a new generation of music-lovers, and there were always those who wanted the best, something that could be heard every day only through records.

In the course of years technical improvements stimulated sales. Electric motors and amplifiers, fibre needles and automatic changers, amongst many other advances, made for better quality and more easily produced recorded music. But the really big boom in recorded music dates from about 1950. The introduction of long-playing (L.P.) or microgroove records, about which record companies had hesitated so long, proved immediately popular. The reason was probably not merely that they eliminated the need for jumping up to change the record every few minutes. For the keen gramophone enthusiast storage-space was becoming a real problem.

L.P. made it possible to record a full-length opera on three or four records, taking up no more space than a single symphony recorded on 78's—the old seventy-eight revolutions a minute standard discs. With L.P. it is possible to store 40 or 50 hours of recorded music on a small shelf, an important point in an age of small houses and flats.

IN a few years an amazing range of music has been recorded on long-playing discs. One catalogue of L.P. records of classical music lists 4000 items. The complete catalogue of one company alone runs to 400 pages. If records continue to be issued at the present rate, in a few years catalogues will be the size of encyclopedias. There are now half-a-dozen or more different recordings of many major works, and the choice for the music-lover is consequently sometimes almost bewildering.

The boom in long-playing records has not killed the 78's. There are enthusiasts who contend that the faster speed of the 78 gives better quality, and many items and artists of the past are only available on the old standard discs. But the deletion from their catalogue this year of some thousands of 78's by one of the largest record companies is a sign of the times. Still, the 78 will never disappear, because thousands of people have built up libraries which could be replaced by L.P. only at great expense. And collecting obsolete and rare records is becoming an increasingly popular hobby, with collectors ready to pay many times the issued price for particular records which have become scarce with the passing of years.

REPRODUCERS are now commonly three-speed, giving 33, 45, or 78 revolutions a

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minute at choice, with changeable needles for microgroove and the old standard recordings. The most popular form is combined with a radio-receiver—over 300,000 radiograms were sold last year. The price range is from about £30 to £600, the latter figure being for an individually-made instrument, which is not only handsome in appearance, but also gives reproduction as near perfect as acoustical and electrical engineers know how.

In spite of the competition of television, about £10 million a year is being spent in Britain on reproducers for recorded music and speech. An interesting point is that there seems to be comparatively little snob appeal in record reproducers as there is in the case of television sets. Changes in the figures for different types during recent years suggest that the purchaser is interested in good reproduction at a moderate price rather than in an elaborate piece of furniture, although, in fact, many of the new radiogramphones are handsome in appearance.

The person who cares least about appearance is apt to be the 'high fidelity' or 'Hi Fi' enthusiast. Hi Fi is concerned with getting the most faithful reproduction of sound—one is tempted to add in the case of some enthusiasts, quite regardless of the actual quality of the music! Hi Fi has become a hobby in itself, with a constantly increasing number of enthusiasts with an astonishing amount of technical knowledge and a jargon of their own.

**A**N interesting development of recent years, which has undoubtedly stimulated the boom in recorded music, is the action of many public libraries in adding a record section to their books. Several score of the larger free libraries now have up to 1000 L.P. and 78 discs which can be borrowed for a week, and, not surprisingly, many borrowers find discs they want to own. These libraries help to solve the problem of enthusiasts of moderate means who can only occasionally buy L.P. records priced at more than 36s. each, since they can borrow freely records that would have cost them perhaps as much as £100 a year to buy.

**T**HE way in which the gramophone has boomed since the coming of broadcasting can be judged from the experience of the

leading journal devoted to recorded music. Thirty-two years ago its circulation was about 6000 a month. Since the war, its circulation has soared, and is now about 60,000 a month. It used to review about 150 serious records a year. Now it must review about 1000 a year. Its editor, Sir Compton Mackenzie, estimates that there are now twenty times as many enthusiasts as there were in the nineteen-twenties.

The boom is by no means confined to Britain. In the United States it is estimated that one home in two has a Hi Fi reproducer of some sort, in spite of the great competition of broadcasting and television. In France last year about half-a-million three-speed record-players were sold, one for every 85 inhabitants. It is the same story in Germany and Holland. Even in the large areas of the world where absence of electricity means that the old spring-wound gramophone has to be used there is a boom, and imports from Britain are up about fifty per cent by volume on pre-war figures. Exports of radiograms and electrical reproducers have trebled within the last three years.

Gramophone-records in Britain carry substantial purchase-tax by contrast with books, which are tax-free. The reduction in the price which will follow the abolition of the tax will probably accelerate the boom, although, in fact, even with the tax, L.P. records in Britain are cheaper than in many other countries. In the United States something of a price war has broken out in records, but the cost of making a recording of classical music is so high that it seems doubtful whether much reduction is possible with the best records. An opera recording, it is stated, may cost £6000 before a single record is sold, and a symphony £1200, apart from the conductor's fee. Indeed, it seems probable that the huge sales of dance and light music records in a sense subsidise some of the classical recordings.

There is now a new development in recorded music which probably has great significance for the future. This is recording on tape instead of on discs. It has certain technical advantages for high fidelity, there is no wear, and up to an hour's playing without a break is possible. At the moment only relatively few tape recordings have been issued and they work out rather more expensive than comparable L.P. discs, but there seems little doubt that the next few years will see big developments in this field.



## *A Burglarious Adventure*

PETER GORDON

THE reason why we who had been shut up in Stanley Prison for the first month got into the internment camp after those who had been sent in from the rest of Hong Kong was that in the defence of Stanley Peninsula we had continued fighting for a day longer than anyone else. The Japanese were furious about this. They had demanded our surrender on the grounds that all fighting had ceased elsewhere—but we did not believe them.

Being what they were, they paid us out by allotting the former Chinese coolies' quarters in the camp to us, and arranging our move so that we should not get there until the other internees had had time to collect all the furniture, loot, and what have you from the various buildings comprising the camp, and so leave us stripped, for the duration, of every little comfort, and most necessities. For in that undignified scramble, where there was no one to give orders, and no one would have obeyed them if there had been, it was each man for himself—and his wife, if he had one—and bad luck to the hindmost.

Even so, there were plenty of cases of kindness of heart and gallantry of spirit—where the young helped the old, the well helped the sick, and many a good man went without, say, a mattress for three-and-a-half

years, because, having salvaged one for himself, he had given it to a woman or a child or an old man. But there were also many cases of the opposite. To learn a person's true character, be shut up with him or her in an internment camp. It is indeed a revealing experience.

In the scramble for accommodation which ensued—for even Chinese coolies' quarters have wide differences in comfort and convenience—my wife and I and one or two good friends found ourselves in a former air-raid shelter, *not* a choice residence in that climate, where the concrete floor ran with moisture and light penetrated only dimly through the entrance. Luckily, I had been able to carry a mattress out of the prison, and a good Samaritan—God bless him!—had 'collected' one for my wife. This was the only furniture we had.

As an instance of our difficulties at this time let me give one example. We found on our first day in the camp that we had no utensil that would hold water; so we had to find one. With this end in view we were poking about amongst the rubble and rubbish of a bombed building—there were several in the camp—when I had the luck to unearth a large undamaged flower-pot. It had the usual

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drainage-hole in the bottom, but this my wife soon plugged with a piece of wood. For six months that pot was the only thing our 'room' possessed in which to wash ourselves, our clothes, and our few eating utensils. Our jailers, of course, couldn't have cared less.

**D**URING the battle of Stanley my wife and I had occupied, spasmodically, a small flat which later became included in the internment camp. This flat had been looted and its contents knocked about a good deal by the enemy. One of the things we had had in it was a collapsible canvas deck-chair with my name stencilled on the back. Some weeks after we had taken up residence as prisoners in our unpleasant, unfurnished shelter I saw in passing, on a verandah of the Dutch Block—we had several nationalities, who, to start with, kept more or less together—my deck-chair with my name still prominent on its back.

Let me hasten to say here that there is nothing national in this story: many British internees were no better, and some a great deal worse. In fact, we made many good Dutch friends, and one in particular. But I am giving the facts as they were.

I approached the temporary owner of my chair and pointed out to him that it had my name on it and that as our room was chairless he might like to hand it over to me. He demurred. I then informed him that I was aware (one of his own countrymen had told me this) that he had four chairs in his room, which—the plutocrat!—he shared only with his wife, and that, in the circumstances, perhaps he would like to change his mind. His answer, delivered in a very belligerent manner, was that there was no such thing as private property any longer and that he intended to keep the chair and defend his possession of it by force, if necessary.

If that was his attitude, I told him, my friends and I would take the chair by force, if necessary, and he had better watch his step.

Hunger is either a breeder of quarrels or the begetter of supreme unselfishness. In that camp I learnt what hunger can do to strong men and to weak women; and I learnt that often those of whom one would least expect it turn out to possess the virtues that rank the highest when one is up against it.

So the matter rested for a few days, and then I got ill.

When I began to get better my wife wanted me to sit outside our damp and dark abode in the sun, but we had nothing but the ground to sit on. It was then that, unknown to me, she made her plan.

**W**E had been warned by the Japanese Camp Commandant that the sentries and night patrols had orders to shoot on sight anyone seen outside his block after dark. My wife, meanwhile, through many sleepless nights, had been observing the movements of the night patrols—each accompanied by an Alsatian dog—and the position and times of relief of the various sentries, and had arrived at the conclusion that about two hours before dawn seemed to be the quietest time.

She waited for a moonless night and, wearing rubber-soled shoes, stole from our shelter when I was asleep. Well she knew that I should have forbidden this dangerous escapade had she not kept it secret from me.

To reach the Dutch Block she had to take a path up a little hill and, at one point, pass unpleasantly close to the barbed-wire fence that surrounded the camp, a place where one might easily encounter the night patrol.

She accomplished the journey successfully and arrived at the back of the Dutch Block. She dared not go to the front, which faced the old bowling-green—a place far too exposed for her purpose. To her dismay, she discovered, what she had not realised during her daylight reconnaissances, that an iron grille was locked at night across the only entrance by which she could reach our Dutchman's verandah. But the grille, though much taller than herself, did not quite reach the ceiling. She was slim—slimmer than usual by that time!—and, climbing the grille, horribly exposed to view meanwhile, she got over the top and dropped to the floor on the other side.

Up the narrow stone stairs she crept—the back stairs for the use of Chinese servants in peacetime—until she reached the verandah she wanted. The Dutchman's door was open and she could hear him snoring; she prayed that his wife was asleep too. There stood the deck-chair; but she had to fold it up—a difficult job to do in silence on a dark night. Nevertheless, she managed it without waking the sleepers. Then down those narrow stairs again with her awkward load. Arrived at the grille, she saw at once that she would never

## TWIGA—THE GIRAFFE

be able to hoist the chair over the top without making a tremendous clatter. But to her joy she found that the bottom bar of the grille stood about four inches from the floor. Pushing the folded chair a little way through, she climbed back over the top. Then, on the other side, she pulled it towards her along the rough concrete floor, where the scraping noise it made sounded to her like a million nutmeg-graters in action. Free of the grille, she hoisted the chair up on to her shoulder and ran. A streak of dawn in the sky had warned her that stealth, with all its attendant delays, might be more dangerous than speed.

I KNEW nothing of all this, dozing on my mattress in the dark. But I could see a

space of light—the lifting of the dawn, no doubt—framed in the entrance to the shelter. At that moment it was darkened and someone entered.

'Who is that?' I asked.

'Me,' in my wife's voice.

'Where have you been?'

'Outside.'

'You know that's dangerous!'

'M—m.' She was out of breath. I suddenly realised that she had been running.

I struck a match. The light caught the sparkle in her eyes. 'What have you been up to?' I demanded.

'I've just had a burglorious adventure,' she said, and she began to laugh.

Our Dutchman never said a word. We kept that chair until the atom-bomb freed us three years later.

## Twiga—the Giraffe

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STEPHEN HAWEIS

THE most widely understood language of East Africa is Swahili, and in that tongue 'twiga' means giraffe. A giraffe is an African ruminant when it's at home, horned and hooved, and is really quite out of its proper environment on baby's bed of a Christmas morning. We have grown so accustomed to nursery representations of it that it is almost a shock to see one alive and walking about upon broad acres, and no circus tent in sight. One feels that the animal ought to roll on small wheels like its grotesque counterfeits. But, however absurd the toys, the living model exceeds them in every way. Close up, or far away, we incline to the old farmer's view: 'T ain't true—there's no sich animile!' We are also convinced that it must be the most ungainly creature upon earth, but when it moves we find it to be one of the most graceful, with a dancing gait which makes us laugh

with, and not at, it. There is nothing prettier than to see a baby giraffe gambolling around its mother, or playing with another of its own age. Nature is full of surprises that way.

For a lover of animals it is a highly charged, emotional moment when for the first time he sees the giraffe free and upon its native ground. Strange to say, there are many of them where there are any at all, and, praise be, they are rigorously protected. Different varieties are found in different parts of Africa. There are two species and two sub-species, the principal difference being in the number of horns, but no giraffes occur south of the Orange River. The Makati plains in Tanganyika, those immense flat lands studded with clumps of thorn-trees, mimosa, and an occasional giant euphorbia or baobab, are the home of a great many animals, especially zebra, wildebeest, eland, and others of the buck tribe, and among

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these the giraffe lives as a very welcome neighbour, doing, as he must, whether he will or no, eternal periscope duty. Perhaps that is what developed in giraffes the insatiable curiosity which is one of their principal characteristics in captivity. A giraffe hates to feel that he is missing anything, and this again is possibly the reason why giraffes live better in circuses than in zoos—there's more going on. They may die, like many other people, from ingrowing boredom. Seeing so much from their exalted position in the world makes them also the most difficult of all animals for a hunter to stalk.

Sometimes the first glimpse is of a pair with a baby enjoying hours of family happiness far from the madding herds. Then it may be that the baby cultivates the desire to have as long a neck as Father when it sees him browsing contentedly from the tops of the trees, for the trees which the giraffe prefers are none of them large, seldom more than twenty feet high, which is about the giraffe's limit. They munch the sharpest, longest thorns along with the leaves and lick them into their mouths with their long black tongues as if these tongues were impenetrable. They have a great objection to the large forest trees or indeed anything over which they cannot see; doubtless the big trees make them feel small, and it is humiliating to feel small when you are twenty feet high!

ONE would suppose that the giraffe must be a very conspicuous thing anywhere, but it is not. The animals vary in colour from very dark to very light, and occasional cases of albinism are reported. The albinos must look very like those white skeletons of trees killed by forest fires, and peeled by the sun, that are so characteristic of African forest scenery. It is easy to say that Nature's wise provision clothes them in the colour of sand, earth, or dried grass. It is true that they are then most difficult to see, but while Nature may paint a grasshopper grass-green, she has never attempted the lush green of young grass to conceal a cow, and all the plains-dwellers are seen just as often against that background as any other.

Strange as the giraffe appears to eyes accustomed only to domestic cattle, its peculiarities do not prevent it from being well able to take care of itself. It can run with the speed of a good horse, despite the fact that it moves both fore and hind legs of each side

alternately—that's just another of its oddities. It can kick, like an ostrich, in three directions, and may do great damage with its head, for, though its horns are not long or sharp, there is quantity to make up for quality, and a giraffe's head must weigh twenty or thirty pounds. A twenty-pound lump of anything at the end of an animated ten-foot pole is a dangerous weapon. Another detail is that baby giraffes are born with horns, perhaps the only animal that is.

It is related that a bull-giraffe is a match for a lion, but it is not likely that it often gets a chance to prove it. The lion is wise enough to hunt it in pairs and small companies, against which the giraffe is quite helpless. It is the lion's easiest prey when it can be surrounded. Like many people with a strong reputation for nobility of soul, the lion is grossly overrated. The king of beasts has no aspiration to fight fair, and is as mean as an alley cat when it comes to self-interest. When hunting, one lion draws the giraffe forward while the other springs from behind, and the first blow of the paw, or shake of the lion's head when its jaws have closed upon the giraffe's neck, brings the giraffe down—dead.

The greatest hog for trophies would not regard shooting this gentle beast as sport, but giraffes would be quickly exterminated if general shooting with modern rifles were permitted. The hide is used for making reins for horseflesh, and shields and sandals for natives. The giraffe is also the only animal which can provide thirty feet of whiplash in one straight piece, such as was used in the old days to drive the long teams of oxen. The skin is extraordinarily thick and tough when fresh; its weight makes a full load for twelve men. It is always in demand, because so few giraffes are killed, and a dead giraffe must be watched by the hunter with some attention if he expects to get a perfect skin. The tassel of black hair at the end of the tail has a trick of melting in the sun before the body is cold, for it is worth seven dollars and more to anybody—enough to pay a native hut-tax for a year three times over. It is used to plait into elaborate bracelets and ornaments, for it is beautiful, and as strong for its size as the tassel of the elephant's tail, one hair of which is often thick enough to make a finger-ring.

IT is pleasant to record that all the big game which is in any danger of extinction is being

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carefully preserved in Tanganyika, but occasionally the Government is asked to kill off as pests elephants and rhinoceroses which are doing extensive damage to native food-crops. It is very rarely that an inoffensive animal like the giraffe comes under official ban—but that has happened.

There was a giraffe in Tanganyika which caused infinite trouble to the telegraph company by tearing down the wires along the railway with its horns. It seemed to have a passion for telegraph-wires almost equal to that of the Wagogo, who use them to make the wire bangles of which they are so fond. Of course, the wires are placed sufficiently high to be clear of any ordinary wild stock, and it is not four-legged marauders who are suspected when a break occurs. But these wires were found intact, not stolen, simply broken down. The standard poles, being twenty feet high, are supposed to defy the efforts of the largest giraffe which did not deliberately leap to destroy them. If the damage was done by a giraffe, the authorities argued, it must be a very large one, a giant of its kind, and when the story was brought in by an eye-witness it was scarcely believed. Perhaps the poles were leaning and the wire sagged just enough in the middle? It simply could not be that a giraffe would deliberately destroy British Government property so often!

Eventually, however, the Game Department was obliged to accept responsibility. It sent out a hunter with a licence to shoot and destroy the marauder. For a long time he hunted in vain. The hunter and a friend scoured the country with a car and made frequent trips on the railway-lines in the little trolleys which are pushed by hand by a few natives, who run without complaint on the scorching-hot strips of steel, or on the rough stone bed between them, which one would think could not be much better. At last they met their quarry at a level-crossing. Near the pole this giraffe could easily reach the wires with his long black inquisitive tongue. Halfway between he might have run into the sagging wire without straining upward at all. There was no doubt whatever as to its identity—there could not be two giraffes in all Africa like that one! The hunter and his friend sat in the car almost too astonished to speak; neither had ever seen any giraffe to

compare with it. The hunter reached noiselessly for his rifle. In a few minutes the great fellow would be represented only by an escort of fine dust unless he was brought down. They were already dangerously, ridiculously close. Most giraffes do not wait to scratch their necks against telegraph-poles when there is a snorting automobile on its way to encompass their destruction—certainly not when it is within thirty-five feet of them. But this one was unusual in every respect.

'That,' said the giraffe to the four winds of heaven, 'is not only the strangest, but also the largest, beetle I ever saw in my life. No doubt it is the King of the Beetles, and, since I am a great chief among the giraffes, it is right and fitting that we should meet. Without doubt it is now preparing to give me some sort of salute.' It was. The salute which was being prepared was of one gun. The hunter raised his rifle to his shoulder and drew back the bolt. The animal's quick ears at once shot forward as it stopped licking the telegraph-wire, but it did not run. Instead, it stayed just where it was, beaming with assability from its huge black eyes. The hunter could not pull the trigger. He lowered the weapon. 'It's an easy shot,' he observed, so as to gain a little time.

'Couldn't miss at that distance,' said the chauffeur.

'Did you ever shoot a giraffe?'

'No, sir, I never did.'

And the giraffe stood and watched them. It lowered its head and, for a moment, seemed to be going to come closer. Step by step it did come towards them, very slowly, until it was not more than twenty feet from the bonnet of the car.

'Would you like the shot?' asked the hunter. 'You don't often get a chance like this. You shoot it!'

'No thanks—it's your affair. I really don't care about it. Not that giraffe, anyhow.'

The hunter sighed as he raised his rifle for the second time. BANG! He fired six cartridges in quick succession, but without any of them taking effect. 'We'll be getting home now,' he said gently, as the giraffe sprang along in the general direction of Abyssinia. 'We found him, at least, and we got a shot at him. I suppose anybody's liable to miss, that is—once in a while!'

# The New Students of Old Heidelberg

REG BUTLER

MARK TWAIN and Sigmund Romberg have given Heidelberg students a highly-coloured reputation to live up to. While Mark Twain's book *A Tramp Abroad* portrayed the rollicking university life in Heidelberg of the 1870's, Romberg's *The Student Prince* has given the musical-comedy view. To-day, visitors cannot help a twinge of disappointment—for it is now quite useless asking the way to the nearest duel. That pastime was forbidden by the Occupation authorities, on the grounds that it encourages militarism. True, some duelling continues secretly, but the inquiring visitor meets only clam-like silence on the subject.

In fact, Heidelberg students just do not co-operate with the tourist industry. They no longer swirl away their evenings with beer, or beat up policemen, or lurch through the streets of a night, roaring out student choruses. Instead, they deprive Heidelberg of essential local colour by quietly spending their days and nights in study.

Like their British counterparts, German students now habitually eke out funds by working during vacation. Many students, for example, turn Heidelberg's touristic renown to account by becoming part-time guides. Certainly none are better at describing that boisterous student life of former days, now vanished from a changed world.

THERE is nothing new in the contemporary ban on duelling. Ever since the custom began, centuries ago, it has always been officially prohibited. As Mark Twain observed: 'The law is rigid; it is only the execution of it that is lax.' But post-war enforcement of the law has completely succeeded in eradicating the duelling ritual.

The post-war ban has also overthrown the Student Corps—the exclusive duelling clubs

or fraternities, which played a dominating part in student social life. Their origin dates from the foundation of Heidelberg University, in 1386. With a constitution modelled upon that of Paris University, the student body was divided into four 'Nations', each marked by a different-coloured cap. The Nations were later remodelled into the five Student Corps, distinguished by caps of red, yellow, green, white, or blue. Members of each Corps mixed socially only with caps of a similar colour, and stiffly ignored all others. The privileges of Corps membership were strictly limited to a minority of students. To gain admission to a fraternity, a student had to fight at least three duels with members of the rival Corps.

The tavern where the duels took place provided Sigmund Romberg with the setting for *The Student Prince*. A moderate-sized establishment, its upstairs rooms were used for duelling for over a century. Bare and sparsely furnished with a few wooden chairs and tables, the premises bore no resemblance to the lavish sets designed for stage performances of the world-famous musical comedy.

Duellists were heavily padded with protective bandages and had guards for eyes, ears, throat, and armpits. They used razor-edged but blunt-pointed swords. Dexterous wrist-movement aimed at slashing the opponent's head. Unless previously stopped because of serious injury, a duel lasted for forty rounds of six strokes each.

With any luck, a student could soon acquire several gashes across his cheek, which would remain a constant source of pride in later years. Duelling scars were venerated as deeply as the English old school tie. And they served a like purpose, as a badge of class distinction.

To guarantee that scars should last a life-

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time, doctors helped by cobbling gashes together as clumsily as possible. Having wounds treated was usually more of an ordeal than receiving them, and, as Heidelberg includes a medical faculty, there was no lack of semi-trained talent with needle and thread. Certainly a surgeon would get no thanks for any skill at invisible mending. Indeed, if a student suspected that the job had been done too neatly he would tear off bandages and plaster and keep his wound gently festering. Like Red Indians and other primitive races, duellists had to mask all emotion when submitting to ordeal by sword and surgery. They disciplined themselves to show no pain, lest they be scorned by their tribe.

But all that is now past. It is unlikely that ritual duelling will ever return—unless re-armament of Germany leads to renewed admiration of the militarist virtues, of which cheek-slashing was a symbol. As though marking the final end to the epoch, a fire broke out two years ago and destroyed the duelling tavern made so renowned by *The Student Prince*.

That musical comedy has also given fame to the drinking-songs of Heidelberg. In the singing and the drinking, the Student Corps played a leading part. Grouped around a table, each fraternity keeping severely to itself, the Corps members were all heavy beer-drinkers. They had to prove their capacity before membership was granted. The Corps even had a Beer King, democratically elected by seeing who could drink most in a given space of time. Student beer-drinking to-day is a much less gargantuan business. Money-shortage and high prices make life much more difficult compared with what it was in former times.

With the duelling inn burnt down, the two remaining taverns traditionally favoured by students are the Red Ox and Zum Seppel. But, though crowded to capacity every evening, those beer-halls do not necessarily contain many students. American servicemen and officials are much more likely clients.

**A**LMOST unique among German towns with over 100,000 inhabitants, Heidelberg totally escaped war damage. That freedom from bombing is explained by an unofficial agreement that Heidelberg should be spared in exchange for similar immunity for Oxford and Cambridge.

During the Allied advance into Germany, Heidelberg hurriedly surrendered when troops presented themselves at the city boundaries. In fact, the only damage was the demolition by German engineers of the centre spans of the Old Bridge which picturesquely crosses the quiet-flowing Neckar.

Since then, the occupation authorities have remained firmly rooted in Heidelberg. On the town outskirts, an entire settlement of modern flats and shops has arisen for the use of occupation officials. The local inhabitants call it 'Little America'.

In addition to the American influx, Heidelberg's population has also been swollen with refugees from the east and from the heavily-blitzed towns of the Rhine valley. That all combines to make the free-and-easy student life a memory of the past. Competition among students for living-space and for seats at their favourite tavern are just different aspects of the same problem. Lodgings are hard to find, and many students must travel back and forth daily from outlying villages.

Some of the traditional student merry-making, however, still remains. One night every summer, for instance, students drink and dance until dawn in the illuminated Castle grounds.

Such festivities, on a far grander scale, originated centuries ago. The royal court, dwelling in the most beautiful of Germany's castles, knew how to entertain. A key role was played by the giant Heidelberg Tun—the world's biggest wine-barrel, holding 49,000 gallons.

The Heidelberg Tun was built in 1751, the last and grandest of three such casks, of which the first was constructed in 1591. Vineyard owners in the region were encouraged to pay their taxes in kind, all the wine being tipped in together. Understandably, no peasant ever paid with his choicest vintage! Then, for every festival where quantity counted for more than quality, the wine was pumped up to the banqueting-hall or into the Castle gardens.

To-day's students are two centuries too late to enjoy such freely-flowing refreshment, for the present Heidelberg Tun, unlike its predecessors, has been filled on only a few occasions. But at least the students can still dance on the top of the gigantic wine-cask itself, where there is space for thirty couples at once.

Looking on genially from the wall of the vast cellar is a painted statue of Perkeo, the dwarf who became court jester and confidant

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of kings. Tradition claims that he could drink fifteen bottles of wine a day!

THE link was always strong between the University and the royal court. In early centuries of the University's history the students were granted special privileges that set them above the laws governing the ordinary citizens of Heidelberg. Indeed, right from its foundation in the 14th century the University formed a self-governing community.

As the city constabulary has only limited jurisdiction over offending students, the University soon opened its own private prison. At first the lock-up was a wretched dungeon under a stone staircase. Later, more congenial quarters were established.

A spell in jail became a traditional student ambition. Even the most respectable of professional men would in after years look back with pride and nostalgia on a prison sentence acquired during their wild-oat youth.

A student's chief problem was how to secure admission in face of strong competition. The most popular means was to insult a policeman. But if two hundred young men set out on a student rag, the police couldn't possibly arrest more than a few ringleaders. So getting imprisoned was no easy task.

The student lock-up comprises three cells on the top-floor of a house adjoining the University. Informality was the rule. Prisoners could wander at will from cell to cell, and could entertain friends. A visit often developed into a non-stop bottle-party!

The prison furniture is meagre—a few broken-down beds, students being expected to provide their own linen; a deeply-carved table; a few simple wooden chairs; and iron stoves for winter warmth. A jail sentence, like those much-sought-after duelling scars, was an uncomfortable means of gaining the respect of fellow-students.

To ensure posterity would never dispute their proud claim of having been in prison, students carved name or initials upon any convenient wall, door, or ceiling. The

artistic added a profile portrait done with candle-smoke or colours. The poetic found space for ribald verses, describing their offence or expressing heated views about University authorities. Many others fixed passport-sized photographs to the cell doors and covered them neatly with glass, using moistened bread as putty. Over the years, that 'cement' has set hard as stone.

Until last century the University often jailed student malefactors in Dilsberg Castle, eight miles up the Neckar. Once again, however, a prison sentence made a pleasant change. On one occasion some passing travellers wished to see the cells. The jailer said he would like to oblige, but the student prisoners had gone hunting in the forest and had unfortunately taken the keys with them!

Being so long subject to their own university regulations and, in effect, protected from normal city laws, Heidelberg's students enjoyed a degree of licence which would certainly never be tolerated in the ordinary citizen. Students could go tramping around the streets till dawn, making the night hideous with their choruses, and policemen were almost powerless to prevent them.

In the modern world, such privileges have no place. A university course is no longer regarded merely as a pleasant social interlude for aristocratic loungers. The gay life of singing, drinking, and duelling portrayed by *The Student Prince* was, in any case, the lot of only a minority of Heidelberg students. Today it is the lot of none of them.

A colourful era has ended, but a more democratic one has begun. Previously, the proportion of working-class students in Germany was far lower than in Britain. Today the University population is drawn from all classes, irrespective of social origin.

The new students of old Heidelberg, the men who will inherit Germany's future, are no longer imbued with the traditions and privileges of a German officer caste. Living closer to the realities of ordinary citizenship, they give one hope that Germany's aggressive days are over.

## Much Ado About Nothing

*A tailless dog, to a friendly shout,  
Will happily wag his nothing about.*

D. S. F.



## *When in Rome*

LAURENCE KIRK

ROME! Does any word of so few letters conjure up such immense vistas of glory and grandeur? Civilisations are piled one upon another there—the old, the young, the very old, just like fathers and grandmothers, babies and great-grandparents, all living together in one family. The present is the past, and the past the present. But in spite of all this, if you make your first entry into the imperial city at the wheel of a car, it is the present only that strikes you. You don't see the Seven Hills; you don't think of the popes and emperors; you don't care about the ruins, the gardens, the fountains, the thousand churches. Your only interest is to get out of the Eternal and Holy City again without being massacred by a tram.

No respectable guidebook will tell you when the trams took control of Rome: they will tell you everything else, but not that. Anyway, they are in control. The Roman tram is the largest, noisiest, and most ferocious of its species. It jumps the traffic lights, cuts its corners, and ignores the police. It is just as supreme in its peculiar jungle as the African elephant is in his—and like the African elephant it often moves about, one behind the other, in vast families. If your instinct for self-preservation is even rudimentary, you just wait until they have gone by.

If I appear to be bitter about the Roman trams, it is because they nearly broke up my marriage exactly six days after it had started. Helen and I had come by easy stages from England on our honeymoon and had stayed at Pisa on the sixth night. There was some dispute the next morning as to where we should stay the seventh. Helen said that I would be tired after the long drive from Pisa and we had better put up at Civitavecchia. I replied that the hotel at Civitavecchia didn't seem to be up to honeymoon standards, that I was not in the habit of getting tired after quite a short run, and that there was no reason to suppose that Rome was different from any other city. Of all the many silly things I have said in the course of my life, this was undoubtedly the silliest.

OUR entry into the great city presented no difficulty at all. There were no long dreary suburbs to go through. We just coasted down a dusty hill behind St Peter's—and there was the River Tiber with a broad bridge straight in front, all ready to take us over.

After the bridge the road dived into a tunnel, presumably under one of the Seven Hills, and the tunnel was full of trams. That was the beginning, but there was no real

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difficulty so far. The traffic was moderate and the streets broad. Our intention was to pick on the first possible hotel we passed; but there weren't any hotels in that part, possible or impossible, and the streets began to narrow and the trams increased. The reason the streets narrowed was a very simple one. Parking, whether allowed or not, was practised on both sides of the street, sometimes two deep, so the only space left for progress was on the tram-lines.

I think we came in by the Corso Vittorio Emanuele and then turned right up the Via something else. They mark the names of the streets on a small smudgy plaque two storeys up, which isn't very helpful to the foreign driver. The only place I know we went through was the Piazza Venezia, because I recognised the small single balcony Mussolini used to harangue from. We went round the Piazza Venezia three times. Every time we saw a promising exit, the trams headed us off, and there was nothing to do but make another tour of the Piazza. Helen didn't make any comment. She is a nice girl, and a tactful one, but there wasn't the slightest doubt that she was thinking of the charms of Civitavecchia.

Having finally escaped from the Piazza Venezia, there were other adventures horribly similar to those we had already had; and then suddenly, not having seen a hotel all this time, we found ourselves in a region near the railway-station where every building was a hotel. One might think that would have solved our problem. It didn't in the least. As long as one kept moving and didn't mind too much where one was going, driving in Rome was a simple matter. It was when you stopped that the trouble began. The cars were still parked on both sides of the streets, so Helen had to nip out on the trammy side, and rush into the hotel to see if they had rooms, while I effectively blocked the traffic in the meantime. What would have happened if they had had rooms and we had had to get the luggage out, I just can't think. Anyway, they hadn't, so that problem solved itself.

The fourth hotel we tried looked more promising, but was at a corner, one of those corners which the tram lines cut quite close to the kerb. Helen did her stuff as quickly as ever and disappeared through the swing-doors while I looked anxiously in the driving-mirror. This time to my horror I saw that it was not just ordinary traffic piling up behind me, but a convoy of trams, and angry trams at that.

Perhaps I ought to have mentioned earlier that my car was almost as new and expensive as my wife. Anyway, whether I mentioned it or not, that was my dilemma. If I went on, I might never find Helen again: if I stayed, the car would be squashed flat. I don't know how I would have solved the problem if left to my own devices; but now the car began to move forward. The leading tram had just pressed itself against it and begun to push.

There was no good arguing in a situation of this kind. With one last agonising glance at the swing-door, I put the car into gear and drove on. Two or three blocks later I found a side-street with no tram-lines in it, and rushed into it like a rabbit to its burrow. And not only were there no tram-lines there—there was a hotel with empty rooms and a garage opposite. I unloaded the luggage, garaged the car, and rushed back to retrieve Helen.

**B**UT now a new problem arose. Was it two or three blocks which I had gone on in my agitation? And what was the name of the hotel? The plain answer was that I didn't know either. Every corner was like the next, and each had a hotel at it. As for the name, Roman hotels spell their names in neon lights from the sky downwards, which doesn't assist the distracted driver to read them from below.

I tried the first corner first. Had a tall attractive young Englishwoman asked for a double-room about ten minutes ago? All I got was a disdainful shrug as the clerk went on adding a vast column of lire. The next corner was more promising. In fact, I was almost sure it was the right place. But here there was a queue waiting, and it was chaos. The Italians have no aptitude for behaving in queues.

This time I never got as far as asking about the tall attractive young Englishwoman. What was the point? If Helen had been there, I would have seen her. What on earth had she done with herself? Surely the only intelligent thing was to stay there where I had last seen her?

I came wildly out of the hotel. I looked up the street. I looked down it. I looked across and damned the trams. Finally I looked up to heaven and was spelling out the unlighted neon letters when I heard a clear attractive voice beside me. 'The Signore is a stranger here. He has lost his way perhaps?'

## WHEN IN ROME

The voice belonged to a well-dressed and very charming young woman, only about twenty years old. She had dark almond-shaped eyes, which seemed to me both sympathetic and rather mischievous.

'I've lost something much more important than that,' I answered briefly. 'I've lost a wife. A rather new wife.'

'Ah! That is bad. I had wished it were something more easily replaced. But she won't have gone up to heaven already, will she?'

I gave her a sharper look this time. It was an extraordinary thing to say, and the charm of the voice didn't quite match with the mischief in the eyes.

'I was looking for the name of the hotel,' I replied coolly. 'We were in a car, I was driving, she went in to ask for rooms, and one of your trams pushed—actually pushed me away round the corner. You are Italian, aren't you?'

'Yes, I am Italian—a Roman, in fact. And I agree about the trams. But tell me more about your wife, please. She is tall, beautiful, and blonde, no?'

'She is tall, beautiful, and just as dark as you are.'

'Ah! That is a pity. It would have been so much easier for her if she had been blonde. The Roman men will do anything for a blonde woman. Brunettes are two a penny.'

'Then I think I am glad she is dark! The thing I can't understand is why she couldn't just wait for me at this corner. It was the obvious thing to do.'

'Obvious, yes, and very ordinary. How long have you been married, Signore?'

'Six days.'

'That is a long, long time. Now if I had been married six days and was a stranger in London and had been parted from my husband by a tram, what do you think I should have done?'

'Stayed where you were so that he could find you.'

'No!' She pronounced her noes in that short, sharp Italian way, as though she were swatting a fly. 'Oh no! I should have gone to the bar at the Ritz, or Claridge's perhaps, and waited to see how long he took to catch up with me.'

'But she doesn't speak Italian. She doesn't know the equivalent of the Ritz or Claridge's here.'

'I think she will find somebody who does—'

just as you have. Supposing we start with the Caffè Greco first. We can always ring back here to ask if she has turned up.'

I WAS longing for a drink and got into the taxi which appeared magically at the lifting of Angelina's forefinger. It wasn't till after we were in the taxi that I learned that her name was Angelina. She said that it would be easier for me to call her that than the rest of her name, which was rather complicated. She was an excellent guide—knew every building of any importance; but she also got in a lot of searching and pertinent questions about my private life. If I had only been married six days, how long had I been engaged? Was being engaged worse than being married, or vice versa? Wasn't six days rather a long time to live with one person? Did I really think it would last? Well, if I did, how long? A fortnight, a year, a lifetime, eternity? I was just replying that the one thing married couples didn't have to worry about was eternity, when, to my great relief, the taxi drew up at the Caffè Greco.

The Caffè Greco was a very grand place, and Angelina behaved much better inside it than she had in the taxi. In fact, she was far the best-looking woman there, and I was very proud to be seen with her. Her forefinger secured a table at once, and, having given an order for two dry Martinis, she faithfully went straight off to telephone the hotel—at least, that was what she said she was going to do—while I walked round the crowded tables to see if there was any sign of Helen. There was no sign of her at all, but I will say that the Martinis were excellent.

The next stopping-place was Martinelli's, and that required another taxi. The Martini had made Angelina even more inquisitive than before, and I had a pretty bad time in the taxi. Why did Englishwomen always wear low heels and country clothes? Was it true that they were rather cold physically? How could you tell about that kind of coldness unless you had something to compare it with? Or was the highness of the heels a kind of thermometer in that case? Did I mind her asking all these odd questions? It was only because she wanted to know in case she got married herself one day. Well, if I didn't mind, here was another. Who got into bed first, or did we do it simultaneously from different sides?

Martinelli's was an almost exact repetition

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of the Caffè Greco. Angelina ordered the Martinis and went to the telephone while I made a fruitless search for Helen. Doretti's again was a replica of Martinelli's; but after that it was different. It was then past eight o'clock, and Angelina announced that, as she was feeling rather peckish herself, Helen was probably in the same condition. Therefore from now on we would switch from the bars to the restaurants. But to give ourselves every chance—after all, our sole purpose was to find Helen—we would only have one course at each restaurant and then go on to the next.

Apparently in Rome there is a special place for minestrone, a special place for *fritto di mare*, and a special place for steaks. We took them all in turn, and as they were all close together I was spared the worry of driving in any more taxis. We had already had three Martinis each, and now we had sherry with the soup, white wine with the *fritto*, and red with the tournedos. The result of this was that Angelina seemed to come nearer and nearer, and Helen to go further and further away. I had been watching Angelina fascinatedly while she disposed of her tournedos. Then with a brief disarming smile she put down her knife and fork and looked across the room, which wasn't very wide. 'Wouldn't you say,' she began emphatically, 'that that's quite an unusually attractive couple over there?'

'Yes,' I answered casually. 'Very attractive.' Then, not nearly so casually: 'Very attractive indeed! And, God damn it, the woman's my wife!'

Something came over me then. Perhaps it was the Martinis and all the rest of it. Anyway, I got up roughly and began to stride forcefully across the room.

IT was Angelina who stopped me making a complete ass of myself. I had just gone two steps when I heard her cool, clear voice behind me. 'Better go carefully, Signore. I am supposed to be quite attractive, too!'

That saved me from the worst; but as I came on forward, scowling at that very handsome Italian with Helen, it was as sticky a meeting as anyone could have with a six-day-old wife. 'Well, I seem to have caught up with you at last,' I began.

'Yes, you do,' was Helen's answer. 'I was wondering when you were going to notice us. This is Francesco. He was kind enough to rescue me when you left me in the street.'

'It was a tram that pushed me away. I couldn't help it.'

'And your friend, no doubt, was in the tram. Perhaps you would like to return to her now.'

Francesco had been watching us with considerable interest. Now he put each hand on one of ours and intervened with charming good-humour. 'Signora, Signore, you misunderstand each other. It will be much better if that young lady joins us over here. She is my sister, Angelina, and we have rather a lot to confess to you.'

Angelina meanwhile had strolled over, pausing to greet a friend at two tables. There were brief introductions, then she sat down and gazed rapturously at Helen. Helen returned the stare with reluctant admiration and almost undisguised hostility.

But Francesco wasn't to be put off by a little thing like that. He was looking at the menu. 'They make *zabaiòne* here,' he announced, 'just about as well as it can be made. I think we had all better have that.'

Nobody made any protest, and the *zabaiòne* was ordered.

Francesco then put down the menu and sat beaming at Helen and me as though he were a kind uncle taking two school-children out to tea. He was much younger than either of us, and I shouldn't have been surprised if he were Angelina's twin.

But Helen wasn't thawing yet by any manner of means. 'Isn't it rather a coincidence,' she asked, 'that I should be rescued by you while my husband should be picked up a few moments later by your sister?'

'No!' Francesco replied at once. Again, it was one of those short fly-swatting nos. 'It was quite deliberate, Signora. You see, Angelina and I had had our evening wrecked. We had no place particular to go and nothing we wanted to do. Then as we walked up the street we saw you were having trouble with the trams. We noticed, too, that you seemed an attractive pair, strangers in need of assistance. So we decided to divide you up between ourselves just for a little while.'

'Your good action for the day!' Helen suggested coldly. But she was visibly beginning to thaw. I thought it better to let her do the thawing. It generally is in married life.

'Yes,' Francesco agreed calmly. 'But I'm afraid my good actions are apt to trip over each other. For instance, when you came out of the hotel I led you entirely in the wrong direction. You see, I didn't want it to end

## FASHIONS IN CHEQUES

too soon. I was enjoying myself very much.'

'I was enjoying it, too,' Angelina added warmly. 'Especially in the taxis.'

This lowered the temperature for a moment; but only for a second or two.

'But was it all arranged that we should go to all those places and then finally meet here?' Helen asked.

'Well, not exactly,' Francesco admitted. 'We each knew where the other was all the time, and if it had been a failure from our point of view, you would have met each other again much earlier. On the other hand, if either of us had been making any real progress—which, unfortunately, we didn't—you might not have met until very much later. How do you like the *zabaione*, Signora?'

'It's delicious,' Helen said.

'Well, that's only the beginning,' Francesco ended. 'The night is young and there are a lot more places you must see. You may have noticed that so far you and your husband have done all the paying. Well, that is different now. Angelina and I are the hosts. Signora, Signore, you have given us an entrancing evening and are most welcome to Rome.'

HELEN and I were safely returned to our hotel—in a happy and slightly-intoxicated state—about three in the morning. We left for Amalfi the same day, and never met Francesco or Angelina again.

Looking back on it a year later, I sometimes wonder whether those two charming young people ever really existed. But I am satisfied that they did exist and do believe that they were brother and sister. As for the rest, I don't know. Perhaps they were two young patricians out on a spree, or two juvenile delinquents out to make trouble. They could have been students pursuing their studies, the inexperienced looking for experience, two angels from heaven, or the devil in both his sexes. Probably they were a bit of all these things. But whatever they were, I do feel that it would be a good thing if every young married couple met a Francesco and an Angelina on their honeymoon. I know that when one of us, either I or Helen, is being unreasonable, the other only has to whisper the word Francesco or Angelina, whichever may be appropriate, and quite suddenly all is peace again.

## Fashions in Cheques

### EDWARD FRANK

THERE are fashions in cheques just as there are fashions in costume, and old-style cheques look just as strange to modern eyes as old-style costume. Changing fashion in cheques, as in costume, reflects the history of the times.

A cheque is, by definition, a bill of exchange. It is, therefore, logical that the law relating to cheques should be the Bills of Exchange Act of 1882. Cheques must conform to their statutory definition to be legally recognised as cheques. That definition, compiled from the joint definitions of cheques and bills of

exchange, reads: 'A cheque is an unconditional order in writing drawn on a banker, signed by the person giving it, requiring the banker to pay on demand a sum certain in money to or to the order of a specified person, or to bearer.' It is this definition which governs the form in which cheques are printed, and it is remarkable, considering the narrow limits imposed, what changes have been made.

COMPARED with the cheques of forty years ago, modern cheques are smaller in

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size; are printed in bold characters instead of copperplate writing; show the figures on the right instead of the left; bear a blue stamp denoting a duty of twopence instead of a red stamp for a duty of one penny; and are sometimes in a form which takes them out of the category of cheques.

The size of cheques might well be dictated by the bankers who have to handle them, and it would be reasonable for a standard size to be adopted. In fact, size is determined by public demand. The banks do exercise control, but control is not standardisation. There are three sizes in use—pocket, standard, and company, corresponding in general terms to small, medium, and large. The pocket size may be either folding or flat, according to the manner of binding. The company size is deeper than standard, to allow room for more than one signature. Special cheques usually conform to company size.

Banks make no charge for cheques, but they have to recover the stamp duty. The price of a cheque-book is determined by the number of cheques bound in a book, and the fashion is not the same in all banks. Some adopt sizes 25, 50, 100, and so on; others prefer 24, 30, 60, 120, and 240. The main difference is in the prices, which by the first method are in odd amounts, and by the second method are in even shillings. Large books may be bound to show as many as four cheques to a page.

Special cheques are those printed by banks to the order of customers. Some special cheques bear no more than a printed signature space showing the company name and lines for the signatures. It is usual, however, for special cheques to display prominently at the top the name and address of the customer. Customers have the choice of a wide range of designs, some of which even provide for the use of a different colour from that usually associated with the bank. The extra cost of printing special cheques, compared with ordinary cheques, is borne by the customer, who pays the charge in one sum at the time each batch of books is printed, unless some other arrangement is made.

There is no reason why anyone who wishes to do so should not make private arrangements to have his own cheques printed, provided that his banker has first approved the design. It is permissible for a customer in an emergency to draw his own cheque on a blank sheet of paper, signing his name partly on the paper and partly on postage stamps to the

value of twopence. Many London clubs provide their own blank forms for the convenience of members who want to cash a cheque but who happen to have forgotten their cheque-books.

**C**HEQUES may be open or crossed. The essential form of a crossing consists of two parallel transverse lines. Other words may be added, the usual form containing the symbol '& Co.' within the lines. It has become the fashion for some crossings to bear the words 'not negotiable', which are addressed to the holder (normally the payee) and have a special technical significance but do not prevent the transfer of the cheque. The addition of a bank's name to a crossing means that the cheque must be negotiated through that bank. The words 'account payee only', which have been adopted by some companies, are so recent an invention that they are not even mentioned in the Bills of Exchange Act. Most crossings are addressed to the paying banker, but 'account payee only' is addressed to the collecting banker. They instruct him to credit the payee's account and no other. So long as the payee has a banking account all is well, but when he has no account the crossing becomes a nuisance. Any cheque which is crossed must pass through a banking account, but can be negotiated by payees who have no accounts through tradesmen to whom they are known. This is not so with cheques crossed 'account payee only', and it is strange that any company should assume that everyone has a banking account. The payees are thwarted in their attempts to obtain cash and in addition are given the trouble of returning the cheques for the cancellation of the special crossing.

Most cheques are printed as an instruction to 'Pay \_\_\_\_\_ or order'. The expression 'order' means that payment may be made to some other person nominated by the payee. 'Order' cheques must bear the payee's endorsement, which may be in blank—that is, merely a signature—or may embody an instruction to pay another. These special endorsements must be followed by the second person's signature. If the second payee endorses 'specially' in favour of a third person, that third person must also endorse. There is no end to the number of these endorsements that may be added, and in the days when bills of exchange passed as a form of currency it was

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sometimes necessary to fasten a continuation sheet, known as an 'allonge', to the back of the bill to give room for endorsements. But it is rare for a cheque to bear more than two endorsements.

The number of cheques which are printed as an instruction to 'Pay ..... or bearer' are so few that it is fair to say this custom is dying out, probably because, no endorsement being necessary, there is no evidence on the cheque that the payee has received the money.

THE bold upright characters in which modern cheques are printed are a great improvement on the old-style sloping copperplate writing. But what makes modern cheques so clear are the short titles borne by the banks. When the big five banks were in the process of grouping themselves through a long chain of amalgamations, some of them found it necessary to incorporate in their names part of the name of an absorbed bank. Several of these changes created titles that were difficult for customers to remember, too long for comfortable printing on cheques, and much too cumbersome for bank staffs to use. The staffs supplied their own colloquial names, which were later accepted officially and are now the proper names of the banks.

The transfer of the figures from the left to the right has enabled the banks to improve the speed of listing cheques by adding-machine. The operator works the machine with the right hand and turns over cheques with the left. When the figures were low down on the left, each cheque had to be turned over separately, but with the figures on the right that is not necessary and cheques are handled more rapidly.

The stamp duty on cheques was increased from one penny to twopence by the Finance Act of 1918. Some cheques are not stamped, because they are drawn on accounts which are exempt from the duty, such as friendly societies.

One of the big five banks once made a valiant effort to avoid stamp duty on cheques made out for small sums by the introduction of 'chequelets', which were printed in the form of a receipt and were thought to be exempt from stamp duty so long as they were confined

to sums under £2. This effort was, however, defeated by a court decision that held that chequelets were liable to the stamp duty of twopence irrespective of the amount for which they were drawn.

Many companies and public corporations have taken to using cheques with a form of receipt printed at the foot or on the back. They are recovered from the bank after payment to serve as evidence for audit. Sometimes these cheques contain a printed instruction that the receipt must be signed. Sometimes an endorsement is wanted as well as the receipt, but usually the receipt is both endorsement and receipt. Whatever form the cheque may take, it is always a condition of payment that the receipt must be signed, and this is contrary to the legal definition of a cheque, which is that it must be an 'unconditional order in writing'. Because these documents are not cheques they would not normally be covered by the Bills of Exchange Act, some sections of which give valuable protection to bankers who deal with cheques in the ordinary course of business. The banks meet this problem by requiring every customer who proposes to use cheques bearing a form of receipt to give an indemnity which, in effect, converts the conditional orders into cheques.

Some customers have their own fashions in making out cheques, and frequently set the banks problems which are unexpected. The date is a favourite medium for individual fancy. It may be expressed in Roman figures; it may be an ecclesiastical date, such as 'second Sunday in Lent'; but the real problem comes along when an American or Canadian uses the style common in North America. The English form of 9th February is 9/2, but the American version is 2/9, which would be read in this country as 2nd September. Customers who seek to be original may play tricks with the amount in words, which may be written 'ten pounds less five shillings', to be read as £9 : 15/-. There is no objection to this, because it is a 'sum certain in money', but the figures must be plain, clear, and normal.

These fashions introduced by customers may be as unpredictable and whimsical as fashion in costume, but fashions in cheques introduced by the banks can be depended on to be entirely practical.

# Kalahari Mac on Bushmen

SHEILA B. KINNELL

OUR holiday up country in South-West Africa was over and it was hot and dusty waiting for the narrow-gauge train. At last a fussy goods-train puffed in and, to our dismay, we found only one tiny compartment reserved for Europeans. Laden with suitcases, a wriggling dachshund pup, and two excited children, we clambered up the high steps, to be even more dismayed to find a plump occupant already happily at ease there. Beside him was an open hamper and, once we were inside, he spread his bestockinged feet still more comfortably on our side, dexterously decapitated a hard-boiled egg with his horn-handled penknife and scooped the contents out with the same, grinning cheerfully at us from a round, cherubic face surmounted by a halo of greying hair.

Our scamps soon broke the ice and accepted the stranger's fancy cake with alacrity, and then talk became general. On hearing how disappointed I was at not having seen the famous Bushman painting, 'The White Lady', in the local Brandberg mountains, our companion told us, among other interesting things, that he was Kalahari Mac, himself a well-known South African authority on Bushmen, and that he had written several books on the subject in Afrikaans. Despite the disturbances of clambering children, buzzing flies, and the noise of the train, and Kalahari Mac's own rather halting English, this is what he told us.

USUALLY, he said, he visited the Bushmen in the Kalahari Desert at the beginning of winter, when the weather was most suitable. Lighting a fire to let them know he had arrived, he would make smoke-signals, and it was not long before the Bushmen would steal out of the dry bushes and make a rush at 'Frikkie', as they fondly called him, clinging

affectionately to him and prostrating themselves at his feet. They were very responsive to kindness and praise, he explained, and helpful to those whom they loved and trusted, but they would not be coerced. Stressing their unselfishness, he told us that, to prove it, he had often given a toddler a bunch of grapes, from which the mite would hand his friends one each, time and again, only keeping one occasionally for himself.

These fast-dying-out little Africans can always be recognised by their rounded, lobeless ears and the way their hair grows in stripe formation across their skulls in tight coarse curls from ear to ear. Normally they appear lightish-brown skinned, but if they should ever wash, a thing which never happens from the day they are born, they would be almost white. They average about four foot, eight inches in height and differ from their cousins, the Pygmies, in that they are just individuals banded together, whereas the Pygmies, usually about three feet, eight inches, have chiefs and tribal laws, which seems to indicate that the Bushmen are of an even more primitive race. They differ also from their other cousins, the still more primitive and almost extinct Strandloopers ('beachcombers'), who are smaller, too, but have squarer heads, with a horned effect at the back. Strandloopers have bigger and more pointed noses, ears not so round, and their hair is of a better texture, being less coarse and browner. Bushmen can count to ten, differing from the Strandloopers, who only do so up to three.

A Bushman baby at birth is a rosy colour, with no nose or ears to speak of. The hair then is silky and black and very soft, but within about fifteen minutes of the child's arrival this begins to change and curl so that at a year old the hair is like that of its parents and grows in 'krissy' or tight-curled bands across its head. Another strange peculiarity

## KALAHARI MAC ON BUSHMEN

about this newly-born baby is that its little bottom is greenish in colour, but by its first birthday is the same colour as the rest of it.

When a woman is pregnant and her time comes, labour is easy, probably due to the mother's simple open-air life. She retires into the bushes with some of the other women, where the baby is soon born, and they reappear with the little pink but brown-eyed morsel, wrapped in grass or leaves. At night it sleeps in its mother's arms before the protective fire and is suckled by the mother for the first few months, but as it gets older all the women, and even the young girls, give it the breast.

WHEN Bushmen are thirsty and there is no water available, they look for the tsama melons, which grow in great profusion in the Kalahari and seem to have a sweeter flesh in that area than elsewhere. The Bushmen suck out all the moisture and spit out the pith. A favourite food and means of quenching thirst is the gemsbokwortel, which is a root like beet, but whitish in colour and often four feet long and about nine inches in diameter. This they eat raw. They also have secret hiding-places of water-filled ostrich eggs, from which they suck only a little moisture, which is sufficient to allay their thirst. Kalahari Mac added that he had never seen Bushmen sucking brackish moisture through a straw from the parched earth, as many old-timers have stated.

Bushmen make fire, in the time-honoured manner, twirling one dry stick against another, and the friction, generating heat, soon enables them to get a fire going. However, whenever possible, they like to take fire with them when they leave camp, and so they carry away a smouldering branch to start the next fire.

Inquiring of Kalahari Mac whether Bushmen had a religion of their own, we were told that in the many years he had known Bushmen, their only apparent religion seemed to be their passion for dancing. Nightly, and whenever possible, they dance. The women make the music, squatting on their haunches, clapping incessantly with their hands and singing. The men are always the dancers and they paint themselves to represent animals, such as gemsbok, springbok, jackals, and hartebeest. They hold up the fingers of one hand in front of their foreheads to simulate horns, and coil the other behind them as a tail. They make the cries of the animals they

are portraying, uttering harsh sounds and leaping until they fall exhausted by the dying fire, where they sleep in its heat.

Bushmen are a lazy race and seldom make a shelter for themselves. If they do, it is a rough, branchy shack open at either end. Sometimes they perch in trees, but the huge grassy platform, *naanetjie goup*, as they call it, and sometimes mistaken for their dwellings, is the family bird's-nest. Often to escape from the intense noonday heat Bushmen creep inside the large hollow interiors of deserted anteater holes until it becomes cooler.

Their clothing consists of a small leather apron and maybe beads made from ostrich-shell, which they file into shape with stones and pierce and string on thongs. Their commonest weapons are assegais, knives, and bows and arrows. They are not a modest lot, for when they make a kill it is quite usual for both sexes to shed their aprons and smear themselves all over with the blood of the slain animal.

Fat and roots are dried by Bushmen in the cinders of the fires and used for painting and decorating their bodies in stripes and patterns to represent animals, and when they want to do a rock-painting they search around for special stones, known to themselves alone, for the purpose.

A curious custom if they wish to break a drought is to take a hair from the head of one of them who is known to have been born in a rainy season. This is mixed with fat, which they then throw in the fire in the belief that its smoke brings rain.

BUSHMEN are a hardy race when uncontaminated by modern civilisation and are almost disease-free, but if they get hold of spirits, which they love to drink, they soon become riddled with disease, which threatens them with extinction. Normally, they live to a good old age, and one of the oldest ever known was a woman, reputed to be a hundred and thirty when she died. For snake-bite they have a secret antidote, which they apply after cutting open the wound and massaging or sucking out the poisoned blood. They do not bother much if a companion is sick and dies. They wail for an hour or so and then scratch a shallow grave in the sand with a stick, lay the corpse on its back and scatter grass and sand, and soon forget.

They are polygamous, and it is quite

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common for a man to walk out one day and leave his wife and child behind and then join another band where he takes another wife. He knows that all Bushmen share everything and that particularly they love children, so he is confident that those he leaves behind will be cared for without him.

Bushmen are able to go for long periods without food, but when an animal is killed men, women, and children cut the meat off and devour it raw in front of the fire until their stomachs are so distended that they fall asleep where they are and remain there, even in the heat of the day, until digestion makes it possible for them to cast off their lethargy.

Kalahari Mac related how once his lorry broke down about 230 miles out in the Kalahari, and Sangam, a witchdoctor, between sixty-five and seventy years of age, suddenly appeared. Kalahari Mac asked Sangam if he wanted water to drink but the witchdoctor preferred the stomach juices from a gemsbok Kalahari Mac had shot. Our friend added that he had often had to quench his thirst this way too, in arid parts.

Knowing how much Bushmen like to gorge, Kalahari Mac thought he would try to see how much meat the witchdoctor could eat at a sitting, so he gave him permission to slice some flesh from a dead lion near by, which he seemed to fancy. Sangam must have cut off about fifteen pounds and sliced it into strips, which he chewed slowly in front of the fire. As he still seemed hungry after this, Kalahari Mac allowed him to take a joint from the gemsbok, about twelve to fifteen pounds. This vanished too. The meal lasted from two o'clock in the afternoon until eleven at night. The last Kalahari Mac saw of the witchdoctor was when the old chap walked out of the camp next morning with a satisfied appetite and very swollen stomach.

Both sexes among Bushmen mature at about twelve years of age and Kalahari Mac related a story told him by a Bushman once, of how boys reaching maturity, about a century

ago, had to undergo a painful test to prove their manhood. The candidates would report singly to the witchdoctor and had to stay with him and do whatever he told them. When there were, say, eight to ten candidates, the band gathered round and made a huge fire and started dancing with the witchdoctor leading. Each applicant had to take his turn to place one hand on the doctor's shoulder as he danced. Then when that dance was over the applicants stood in line and a few of the older men would take the first applicant, and so on, and hold him down. A very sharp bone, shaped like a fish-hook, was pushed up the applicant's nostrils, right between the eyes, and then dragged out, tearing the nose to pieces as it came.

As a further test of manhood, after this trial, each candidate was told to take a knobkerrie and go out on the veld and hunt and catch a skunk. The first to succeed gave a shout, killed his victim and tore it in pieces, devouring it raw. Kalahari Mac added, in parenthesis, that to eat such a distasteful animal was surely proof that the candidate had proved himself a man!

On a certain occasion our friend was stranded in the desert hundreds of miles from help, and remembering how swiftly Bushmen can run, he bribed the help of two of them with a bottle of brandy. Away they sped and brought him aid within about three days.

WE were brought back to our own way of life with a start when, with a whistle and a bump, the narrow-gauge train pulled to a sudden standstill at the junction where we all reluctantly tumbled out, and our last sight of Kalahari Mac was of a broad figure wearing khaki shorts clambering on to another train with his hamper and case, his exceedingly wide-brimmed, flat-crowned, cowboy-type felt hat strapped firmly under his chin, and waving us *tot siens* after our most unforgettable journey.

## Echoes

*Solemn in a winter lane,  
A bare bough leaning:  
Laughing in an April rain,  
A young bough greening.*

*Rose-tinted on a winter sky  
To-morrow's snow:  
Rose-tipped along a hedge of May  
To-morrow's glow.*

HAZEL TOWNSON.



## Horse Polisher

YVONNE HULL

THE tonga drivers were making such a din that I could hear them two blocks away. I thought there must have been some sort of accident, and I started to run. My old friend Umar has the fastest horse and is the most reckless driver of them all; so if I hear of an accident I am always fearful lest he should be the victim.

But there appeared to be nothing amiss. True, the tonga drivers were in a noisy bunch, each one chattering and gesticulating and trying to shout down his neighbour. But there was no battered tonga to be seen, no blood, no injured, no dead or dying horse. No harm had befallen my old friend Umar, for there he sat, a little apart from the others, quietly smoking his hookah.

That is one of the things I admire about Umar. He can remain calm and silent when everyone else is shouting himself hoarse. Of course, he is an old man, and they tell me that as one gets older it becomes easier to control one's temper. I do not know exactly how old he is. He may be as young as forty-five or as old as sixty. But it is life, not years, which makes a man old; and life has grizzled Umar's head, lined his face, and robbed him of half his teeth and most of his hair. It has brought him much disappointment and disillusion.

Indeed, he has had to bear the bitterest blow of all—he has no son. Small wonder, I suppose, that he can sit and smoke his hookah, and leave the others to shout.

But you can tell from the way a man smokes his hookah what mood he is in. Instead of taking in the smoke in long contented draughts Umar was puffing away like an impatient steam-engine. It was evident that his soul was not at peace.

'OHAY, Umar,' I said, dropping down beside him, 'what has happened? Why do they make such noise?'

Umar clucked his tongue irritably. 'Because they are fools and cannot hold their tongues,' he said.

'Oh, come, Umar! Although you are silent you are far from calm yourself. What has disturbed you?'

He smoked viciously for a few minutes, and then he muttered: 'A mad sahib—a mad English sahib.'

'But Umar,' I laughed, 'they are all mad, the English sahibs!'

Umar rolled a disapproving eye at me. While I don't think he has much respect for white sahibs, he thinks for some reason or

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other that the young ought to have. In other words, he would permit himself to say that, but not me.

'It is like this,' said Umar, ignoring my remark. 'Late this evening I am going along one of the broad roads in the new town looking for fares. Suddenly a voice shouts from the darkness: "If you would win some money, Umar, go you quickly to the big Place." I do not know who it is or what he means. Nevertheless, I think it is worth while to go and look.

'When I arrive at the big Place I find there what is indeed a strange spectacle. There is a great gathering of tongas, and in their midst is a big tall English sahib. He is speaking, but all the tonga drivers are shouting and jabbering and I cannot hear what it is he is saying. Finally someone shouts above the rest: "He says he will give five rupees to the owner of the best horse. Come on, brothers, he means us to race."

'Oho, what a sight it was!' A gleam came into old Umar's eyes. 'You should have seen us, my young friend, as we thundered round the place, first one gaining and then another . . .

'And who finally won, Umar?'

Old Umar's lips parted in a smile of pleasure. 'Huh,' he said, pretending to be ruffled. 'Do you suggest that there is a tonga horse in the city that can run faster than mine?'

'So you won, eh, old friend?' I laughed. 'And did the English sahib give you five rupees?'

A look of exasperation crossed his face. 'No, he did not! That is where he shows himself to be mad. Instead of giving me the five rupees, he shouted at me angrily, shaking his fist and pointing to the sweat on my horse. I do not understand much of what he is saying; but they tell me that he did not wish us to race the horses, and that he is going to give the five rupees to the horse which looks the best and not the one which runs the fastest. I tell you he is quite mad.

'Quite mad,' I observed sympathetically.

'Tell me—you understand their language—is there a word something like "bludderwell"?'

'Something like that.'

'Oh. I hear this sound very often when he is speaking of my horse. He fills it with anger—like a growl.'

'He didn't like the look of your horse, then?'

Umar gave a deep sigh. 'I say to him: "Good horse, sahib." He says to me: "Good horse, yes—so why you not bludderwell feed

him?" He says much more which I do not understand, but always he points to the ribs and belly of the horse.'

I looked over at Umar's horse. There was certainly not much flesh on it; but in this country one is used to seeing people, as well as animals, who eat only enough to keep alive.

'Why should I make the horse fatter?' he demanded indignantly. 'Would it make it go faster?'

'I doubt if it would,' I said.

'And, anyway, why should I want it to go faster? Is it not already faster than any of their horses?' He jerked his head towards the other tonga drivers. 'Give me one good reason, my young friend, why I should give it more food.'

'It might make it last longer,' I suggested.

'Such things are the will of Allah,' he said crossly. 'Life and death are in his hands, not ours.'

I was surprised at his sudden anger. I wondered if he suspected that he himself would not last much longer, and was secretly afraid that the horse would outlive him to become the property of his wife's sister's son, a lazy boy whom he hated.

'Look at the money I spend on feeding that brute already,' he grumbled. 'Every day he must be fed, even if I earn not a pice. And these are bad times, my young friend, bad times. Sometimes I wish I had one of their things'—he indicated a couple of Sikhs who were standing gossiping beside their motor tongas—"they only need fuel when they are in use.'

The thought of my old friend Umar with a motor tonga was terrifying. I changed the subject. 'Who won the five rupees?'

He spat. 'Horse Polisher.'

Horse Polisher was a man greatly despised by them all. He was ever titivating his horse—rubbing it down and brushing it, and buying paper flowers to put in its harness. Some said that he had once been in a cavalry regiment and was unable to break himself of the habit of continually grooming horses. Others, less generous, said that he was happier in the society of animals than in that of men. I could understand that the sight of Horse Polisher pocketing the mad sahib's five rupees would have made many a tonga driver's blood race. It was fortunate perhaps that my old friend Umar, who must have been so sure that he had won the money, was used to receiving disappointments.

'And what will a fool like that do with five

## HORSE POLISHER

rupees?' he demanded bitterly. 'Why, he does not even smoke.'

'That reminds me,' I said, 'I have brought you a little tobacco.'

'I do not want it!' He pushed it back at me indignantly. 'Do you think that I am in need of charity?'

'Go on, old friend!' I got to my feet and tossed it at him as I walked away. 'Can I no longer give you a present from time to time? You are becoming as proud and stiff-necked as the white sahibs.'

He continued to look cross for a few minutes; then his features relaxed into a smile and he started to rock his head from side to side as we do in my country when we are pleased about something.

THE tonga drivers remained indignant for several days, and then the incident gradually slipped from their memories. I don't believe it occurred to any one of them that the mad sahib might repeat his experiment. A few weeks later, however, he did so—and Horse Polisher was once again the richer by five unearned rupees.

It was several days afterwards that I went to visit my old friend Umar, and the indignation had had time to die down; but I understand there was an uproar the evening that it happened. 'There is no doubt that that sahib is mad,' said Umar bitterly.

'Why?' I laughed. 'What had he to say about your horse this time?'

'He finds a sore beneath the harness straps. Not a big sore—perhaps the length of my finger. But he rants and he shakes his fist at me as though I am guilty of a crime against him. I ask you, my young friend, can such a man be sane?'

'It is often that way with the white men. The sight of an animal suffering affects them strangely.'

'But he did not have to see it! It was hidden by the harness. He only saw it because he moved the strap and looked! And why should he blame me? It is not I, but the strap, which made the sore.'

'He thinks, nevertheless, that you should have it cured.'

'In time it will surely heal itself.'

'The horse-doctor could give you ointment, Umar, which would make it heal more quickly.'

'Give me? Sell me is what you mean! Always I must spend money on this horse. I

tell you, when I have finished buying him food and having him shod there is not a pice left over.'

All the same, my old friend Umar found a few extra pice somewhere and had the sore treated. He would not admit it, of course. 'It has healed itself, as I said it would,' he growled. He denied also that he was giving the horse more food, although the animal suddenly began to get fatter. He told me again and again that he would have nothing to do with the mad sahib in future.

A few days after his last denial, however, I heard that the mad sahib had been judging horses again—by this time he had become quite well known. I went to the tonga drivers' usual haunt and found my old friend smoking his hookah and looking excessively complacent. 'Well, who won the five rupees?' I asked.

'Oh, old Horse Polisher,' he replied casually.

'And what are you looking so pleased about, old friend?'

'Me pleased? Huh!' He vainly tried to hide his pleasure. 'I am also winning a prize,' he admitted finally, and he took two brand-new one-rupee notes from his pocket and showed them to me. I am sure it was the first time he had handled such splendid new notes. Usually Umar's money is dirty and crumpled.

'What did you win it for?'

'It was a special prize. He said that my horse was—was—' He began to fumble in his pocket. 'I do not really understand what it was he said, but I wrote down the sounds so that I could tell you. Ah—here it is. He produced a grubby piece of paper with a few Urdu characters on it. 'Bluddersitebetta. That is good?'

'Very good.'

'But wait till next time. Next time I, and not Horse Polisher, will get five rupees.'

I HAVE no doubt that he would have won his five rupees. The horse began to look splendid. Each week it seemed fatter and livelier, and it even started to look well-groomed. But there was no 'next time', for a few weeks later the mad sahib went back to England.

As I expected, my poor old friend Umar looked very sad when I broke the news to him.

However, he recovered his spirits after a

few minutes. 'He has gone to visit his family,' he said confidently. 'A man such as he,' he added wistfully, 'will surely have many sons. But he will be back next week.'

'England is a long way away, old friend.'

'Well, the week after, then.'

Many weeks have passed since then, and the mad sahib has still not returned. But when one is older I am told the weeks go more quickly, and it may be that Umar does not realise how much time has passed. Also I think it has become a habit with him to keep the horse fatter—to spend a little more on food for it and a little less on tobacco for himself. It may be that he does not even notice that he is smoking less, for, although he denies it, I believe he spends a considerable time each day 'horse polishing'.

Sometimes I take him a little tobacco to encourage him. I was glad I took him some last night, for it was a very sorrowful Umar that I found.

'What is the matter, old friend?' I asked.

He did not answer at first, but continued to smoke his hookah in long melancholy puffs.

'It is like this,' he said at last. 'Last night, very late, I am hailed by a white sahib. He was standing just before a street-lamp when he called—and in outline he is just like the mad sahib. I jump down and pat the horse and say: "Look at horse, sahib! Very good—eh—sahib?"'

'And what did he say?'

'It was not the mad sahib, but another. His face was quite different. He spoke good Urdu too, and he said: "I do not wish to look at your wretched horse. I care not what it looks like—so long as it goes fast." He spat viciously.

'So, old friend,' I said gently, 'does this mean that you are no longer going to care how the horse looks?'

He took a few more puffs at his hookah. They were not quite as melancholy as before. I think it had relieved his feelings to talk. 'Oh, well,' he said. 'Perhaps I will wait until next week. Maybe next week the mad sahib will come back. You know, my young friend, I do not wish to see that Horse Polisher win another five rupees.'

## Trial by Torture

*Packaging Research by PATRA*

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TREVOR HOLLOWAY

OUR American friends are mighty cute, but they aren't tops in everything. In Surrey we have something they haven't surpassed in the States—the Packaging Research Laboratories at Leatherhead. In fact, PATRA House has no equal anywhere in the world.

Never before has packaging been such a vital consideration as it is to-day when so many of our products are destined for the export markets. Comparatively few firms could afford the necessary time and money

to conduct their own long-term research into packaging problems, but fortunately there is at Leatherhead a highly efficient and well-equipped research centre ready and willing to investigate almost every conceivable packaging problem for firms large or small.

The Printing, Packaging, and Allied Trades Research Association (hence the name PATRA) is one of the research associations that operate under the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. Originally it was concerned only with investigations for the

## TRIAL BY TORTURE

printing trade, but during the war years it became urgently necessary to add packaging to its research programme. In those days it functioned just off Fleet Street and suffered heavy damage during the blitz. Leatherhead was the site chosen for new and larger premises, and the present fine building in Randall's Road, costing over £110,000, was opened by the Duke of Gloucester in 1948.

THE Packaging Division has been humorously likened to a cross between a chamber of torture and a battle-school for postmen. To a certain extent this is not a bad description, for packages and packaging materials are subjected to the 'cruellest' forms of treatment that scientists can devise. By means of weird-and-wonderful-looking apparatus, which one might imagine to be the handiwork of Mr Emmett or Heath Robinson, packages are given a rough house—and no mercy shown.

For instance, there is a huge contraption called the Drum Tester, a 'trial by torture' device if ever there was one. It is a revolving metal drum about 7 feet in diameter, not unlike the old-time treadmill, and is electrically driven. Inside it are several wooden baffles, set at various angles. The package to be tested is placed within, the drum is set in motion, and the 'torture' begins. The angles of the baffles are such that the case or carton slithers from one baffle to the next as the drum rotates, falling heavily on its sides, corners, and so on, until usually it becomes very much the worse for wear. After a while the package is taken out and minutely examined to see how it has stood up to its ordeal, and where its weak spots, if any, are. The firm from which the package has come is then sent a detailed report by the laboratory of its findings and recommendations.

Then there are the Drop Testers. One is a suspended sling arrangement fixed to a rope and pulley, the sling itself having a special quick-release attachment. Packages are raised three or four feet from the ground and then suddenly allowed to drop at various angles on to a bed of solid concrete. For purposes of the test, the case may be filled with flour or sand of the same weight as it is expected to contain. The pack may survive—or there may be a crunching thud, and up may rise a cloud of flour!

The other drop tester, an altogether bigger

job, is jocularly referred to by the staff as the 'Hangman's Drop'. This is designed to test heavier and bulkier packages, up to 500 lb. or so. The containers are placed on dividing trap-doors some 15 feet above floor-level, a catch is released, and down crashes the container to its fate. As with the drum test, a post-mortem is held and, with as much care as a man from the C.I.D., an official takes down the particulars of the 'casualty', noting where it failed and why.

Yet another ordeal in store for packages sent to Leatherhead for testing is the Inclined Plane Impact Test. The sound of noisy crashes will lead you to a device that is in the nature of a steeply-sloping 25-foot incline, down which rushes a flat trolley on rails. A package is placed on the trolley at the top of the incline and the trolley is then sent headlong down the slope to crash into a solidly-constructed wooden buffer. The effect on the package is much the same as it would suffer aboard a carelessly-shunted goods train, only more so!

It is indeed a curious kind of laboratory we have described so far. Instead of the conventional quiet and orderliness most of us associate with a research centre, here we encounter what at first seems chaos and bedlam! It is nothing of the sort, of course, but it represents science at work on very important research under conditions, for the packages, that prevail during transport by road, rail, or sea.

BUT not all the Packaging Division is concerned with these knockabout tests, for there are other and even subtler methods of putting a package or packaging materials on trial.

Goods for dispatch to tropical regions often need to be protected against attacks by destructive insects; packages in warehouses or in transit may be attacked by various moulds, or be exposed to petrol or gas fumes; and it is necessary also in many cases to guard against grease or damp penetration. All these factors can affect not only the strength of the packaging materials, but also the contents of the packages themselves. Extremes of heat and cold have also to be reckoned with.

PATRA scientists have studied all these problems. Sections of the laboratory coming under the headings of mycology, entomology, and microscopy are a strange contrast to the

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more boisterous research conducted in the basement of the building.

Numerous types of British and foreign insects are bred and their habits and appetites closely studied. By allowing the insects to attack various packaging materials, the scientist can ascertain which materials are most vulnerable, as well as experiment on the best types of deterrent and how to apply them.

The common cockroach is a notorious attacker of packaging substances, and if ever you pay a visit to the PATRA laboratory you will probably be shown an English specimen preserved in a jar and affectionately referred to by the staff as 'Henry'. He measures about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  by  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch. You will also see many other jars containing numbers of formidable-looking live insects.

Moulds are microscopic plants, and by their growth they can stain the materials on which they live or cause an objectionable musty odour which eventually taints the contents of a package. A wide range of moulds is therefore cultivated at the laboratory and introduced to packaging materials, so that their action, likes and dislikes may be constantly studied. Few people realise what a vast range of moulds exists. The laboratory has no less than 25 large volumes cataloguing moulds that have been identified during the past seventy years or so.

In special 'ovens' the size of a small room, packs are stored under tropical, temperate, or arctic conditions. If Messrs So-and-So want to know what effect the climate of tropical

Africa will have on their packages, PATRA can give them a pretty good idea. One problem met with in tropical climes is that stick-on labels frequently come adrift. This is a matter of no small concern to the customer, especially where foodstuffs or medicinal products are involved, and the laboratory has given much valuable advice on ways of overcoming this problem.

THE laboratory recently perfected a novel device known as a Journey Shock Recorder. If placed inside a pack and sent off by road, rail, or other means, it will faithfully record the number and severity of shocks suffered by the pack in the course of its journey. The value of such data is obvious.

Actually, there are two angles on this perfect packaging business. One firm may be using a pack that is woefully inadequate for its purpose, whilst another firm may be using a method of packaging far and away too good for the job. Both methods are uneconomic.

Small wonder these days that more and more firms are saying: 'Let's see what the PATRA people have to suggest.' And with the aid of Henry's relations in the insect 'farm', the various gadgets in the 'chamber of torture', etc., coupled with infinite patience and skill, the staff of this Leatherhead research centre seldom have to admit defeat, no matter how elusive the problem may prove to be.

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## Come Sing This Useless Love of Mine to Sleep

*Come sing this useless love of mine to sleep:  
It grows upon itself, a tortured thing.  
How should it ever any pleasure bring  
That cannot give and take, nor sweet hopes keep.  
As empty hours of night unending creep,  
I read how others bore the aching sting,  
How all the heavens with Troilus' laughter ring,  
And some no longer care, now cradled deep.  
The ancient songs of love, despair, and death  
Brought peace to men who made them, turning cries  
To music, and to simple timeless words  
Complexity of grief. This fleeting breath  
Takes on a loveliness in which there lies,  
Triumphant, all the soaring skill of birds.*

PETER LANE.



## Gallows-Rescue

EBROCK VALDROSS

THIS tale was first published in London in the year 1617, and until now does not seem to have been republished. Its writer was that peculiarly versatile character John Taylor, 'the Water Poet', who claimed that he heard it told when he was travelling in Germany in 1616.

One stormy winter's afternoon, just as daylight was starting to fade, a small party of sheriff's officers and men-at-arms arrived at a lonely crossroads a few miles from the town of Cologne. With them they brought, in bonds, a convicted malefactor whom they had been ordered to execute by hanging on a roadside gibbet that stood at the intersection of the roads. As the prisoner was a stranger in that district, and his crime had been committed elsewhere, his execution was not a matter of any great interest to the inhabitants of the few small hamlets within easy reach of the crossroads, and only a few peasants assembled to witness the hanging.

It was customary, in those parts, to use both a rope halter and a strong chain in carrying out a wayside hanging, since the corpse of the executed criminal would then remain swinging beneath the gallows, as a warning to other malefactors, even long after the hangman's rope had rotted away. The chain, of

course, had to be a few inches longer than the rope; but on this occasion the sheriff's men were grossly careless. In their hurry to get their job done before darkness fell, they made the chain not longer, but shorter, than the halter. It thus came about that, when the support was taken away from under the malefactor's feet, he had no mercifully quick death before him. He was swinging held by the neck, but held not by the noose of the rope that should have strangled him, for the chain, which could not form a noose tight enough to compress his neck, had slipped above his throat, and had left him hanging with all of his weight on his lower jaw.

When the unfortunate man had already been swinging and struggling in terrible torment for several minutes, there came a heavy storm of wind and rain. The officers of the law, and the few spectators, ran for shelter at the nearest hamlet, giving little thought to the man hanging in agony out in the storm. They well knew that he was unlikely to survive for long, and they were not greatly concerned with the duration of his sufferings.

SEVERAL hours later the rain ceased, and the moon shone brightly from a clear sky.

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Two peasants, a father and his son, who during the storm had taken shelter at a village some miles distant, came driving their farm-waggon past the crossroads. They had heard nothing of the execution, and so were greatly surprised to see that there was a body hanging under the infrequently-used roadside gibbet. While they were staring at the unexpected sight, the man, hanging there in the last extremity of agony and already near to the point of death, started to struggle feebly. The two peasants, who were both pious and kindly Christian men, felt deep compassion for a human creature in such terrible straits. Without counting the dangers of the act, they backed their waggon under the gibbet, and, while one lifted the man in his arms, the other untied the hangman's rope and eased the loops of the chain over his head. Leaving the gibbet tenantless, they drove the almost moribund man with them to the isolated farmhouse where they lived alone.

Full of pity for the man they had rescued, they nursed and nourished him for several days, and, although the disappearance of the malefactor from the gibbet gave rise to much surmise in the district, nobody suspected where he was. After a few days at the farm the rescued man made a quick recovery. All that he still suffered was a painful crick in the neck and occasional spasms of cramp in his lower jaw.

AT every stage of his recovery the man received good fatherly advice from the old peasant as to his future conduct; and he was frequently counselled by the younger man to make his way, as soon as he was fit to travel, to some distant land where he would be free of the danger of recognition as a felon rescued from the very gallows.

'It was God's great mercy towards thee to make me the instrument of thy deliverance,' said the good old man, 'and therefore look that thou make good use of his gracious favour towards thee, and labour to redeem the time thou hast misspent.'

To his father's pious advice the son added: 'Get thee into some other prince's country, where thy former crimes may not bring thee into the danger of the law again, and there, with honest industrious endeavours, get thy living.'

To all of the well-meant advice the rescued man listened with attention, and always he

thanked both men not only for his rescue from a miserable death, but also for their wise admonitions. Yet at heart the man was an incurable villain that had nothing beyond contempt for them both, and felt but little gratitude or kindness towards them.

One evening, just a week after his rescue from the gibbet, he told them that he would be leaving them next day. With every appearance of gratitude and sincerity, he assured them that, if ever his fortune rendered it possible, he would be so grateful that they would yet have cause to say that their kindness towards him had brought to them a rich reward.

His words and sentiments, fair as they sounded to their hearers, were utterly false. In the dead of that night he rose and dressed himself without rousing his hosts. Then he drew on a pair of riding-boots belonging to the young man, slipped silently out of the house and into the stable, and stole the best of the three horses there. Mounted and spurred, he rode out into the night, ready again to return to his life of crime, and resolved never again to be captured.

WHEN, early the next morning, the two peasants discovered their losses, they were aghast at such base ingratitude, and were saddened to see that their great kindness had been altogether misplaced. Their disappointment was great: but both were men of action. With firm resolution they mounted their horses and rode out at once in pursuit of the villain who had so wickedly abused their hospitality and so cynically scorned their good advice. Knowing the bridle-paths far better than he, who, as has been said, was a stranger in those parts, they found and overtook him before he had travelled many leagues. They overpowered his resistance, tied his hands behind his back, and brought him and their stolen horse back to the farm without being seen by any other person.

Next night, towards midnight when nobody was abroad on the roads, they laid him in their farm-waggon, bound as he had been when they rescued him, and drove him back to the gibbet at the crossroads. Having first shortened the hangman's rope by a few inches and retied the slip-knot, they hardened their hearts to all of the malefactor's wild urgent entreaties for mercy and moved the waggon from under him, leaving him hanging as they had first

## GALLOWS-RESCUE

seen him a week earlier. Even in their righteous indignation they had taken trouble to make sure that he would be expeditiously strangled and not left hanging by the chin, but both men overlooked the fact that they had hanged him still wearing the riding-boots and spurs.

THE first early travellers that reached the crossroads next morning were amazed to see the corpse swinging under the gibbet again, after it had been mysteriously missing for a full seven days. As soon as the news spread, most of the peasants of the district assembled at the crossroads to see the strange sight, and all were wondering how it could have come about that the corpse had returned after its unexplained absence. Those of the peasants who had been present at the execution remembered that the malefactor was then wearing shoes and stockings; but now, as all could see, he was wearing well-worn boots and spurs! Even the most credulous of the sightseers found it hard to believe that a corpse from a gibbet could go journeying for a week on horseback, only to return at the end of that time to its gibbet. Yet no man amongst them could offer any reasonable solution as to how the corpse's absence and return had come about.

The news of the phenomenon spread rapidly to the neighbouring hamlets, and even to the more distant towns of the district, so that for several days after its discovery many people came to the crossroads to stare at the corpse swinging under the gibbet. So wide was the interest aroused by the occurrence that, after some days of fruitless inquiries, the authorities responsible for the judgment and the execution of the malefactor issued a public proclamation about it. In that proclamation a full pardon was offered to whosoever had been responsible for the removal and the return of the corpse, provided they came forward and explained the whole circumstances. Also an offer of a considerable monetary reward was made to anyone who would give such information as would result in the matter being satisfactorily explained.

On hearing of these offers, the old farmer and his son came forward and related the whole facts, and were duly pardoned for the serious crimes of gallows-rescue and felonious killing. The high authorities found the story so diverting that they even paid the promised reward for the information. It so came about that the malefactor's unwitting prophecy came true in full, for the kindness of the two good men towards him had indeed brought them the rich reward that he, though insincerely, had promised them.

### Aye Slippin' Awa'

*As I passed by the kirkyaird the sexton was there,  
Oot o' sight tae the waist in a hauf-diggit lair.  
I gied him a cry and he lifted his heid,  
Richt glad o' a breith; and I speired wha was deid.*

*He gied me the name o' a crabbit auld wife  
That I thocht ne'er had changed a' the days o' my life,  
Like a ween mair o' folk. What's become o' them a'?  
Quo' he: 'There's aye somebody slippin' awa'.*

*The folk are a' fremit I see gaun aboot—  
When you're used wi' them, guid, decent bodies nae doot—  
And whaur are the lave I thocht syne would aye be  
A pairt o' the life o' a laddie like me?*

*Aweel, they're upby. As the heidstanes declare,  
The maist o' the folk that I ken noo lie there;  
That many! Like leaves that ye dinna see fa'  
There maun be aye somebody slippin' awa'.*

W. K. HOLMES.

# Twice-Told Tales

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## LXII.—Endings

[From *Chambers's Journal* of February 1856]

WHEN there is a beginning, there must be an end. Nay, more—many beginnings do but announce and signify the ending of things that have gone before. On the 1st of January, our years have advanced towards their close—in our opening chapter, we make some approach to 'Finis'. Are our national beginnings to have also an end—and when? Is Mr Macaulay's famous New Zealander really a prophetical personage? Are the ruins of St Paul's to be one day visible from a broken arch of London Bridge? Who is to be the last passenger over that bridge?—who is to preach the last sermon, and intone the last anthem, beneath Wren's stately dome? We stood by while the Britannia tube was raised to its destined place—will that huge mass of cunningly wrought iron ever subside into the Straits? and who will be the last tourist to cross it *en route* for Holyhead? The first ship entered the new Victoria Docks only the other day—whither will the last be bound that quits it? We heard the first speech in the new House of Commons—when will be the last, and who the speaker? Is it to be the last dying speech and confession of the glorious British constitution?

Other cities, rich and powerful in their day, have had to answer these solemn questions. They have seen their glories 'star by star depart.' Far distant from us be such a day. At present, we rejoice to know that the prevailing symptoms are those of growth and vitality: beginnings still predominate. His Royal Highness has not yet completed his collection of silver trowels. Such 'ends' as we have to record are not signs of death, but indications of new and more vigorous existence. Our interest in the last scenes and final chapters of our social chronicles is, therefore, merely one of curiosity. We confess that we should like to know who drove the last Exeter mail—who lighted the last street-lamp on the

oleaginous principle—and who hired the last hackney-coach from the stand. But we wish to know these facts in a spirit of pure dilettantism.

A few more 'ends', indeed, we are still anxious to witness, though with not the slightest wish to hasten the advent of the New Zealander. We should much like to know, for example, when the last sewer is to discharge its foul contents into the Thames—when the last vestry-squabble is to leave streets uncleaned, houses undrained, and public libraries unopened—when the last common-councilman is to subordinate the wellbeing of his fellow-citizens to a turtle-feast, and the last railway director view the affairs of his company through any other medium than the interests of the shareholders. Some more delicate questionings we would also submit to destiny. Who will offer the last bribe to a voter in order to secure his election, or the last corrupt support to a minister in order to obtain a place? Who will be the last to purchase rank in an honourable profession, or buy for money the pastorship of souls? When for the last time shall we get poisonous food, adulterated drugs, and false doctrines, instead of wholesome life-preserving articles? When will the Custom-house register the last perjury, and Westminster Hall accept for justice the last quibble? When will red tape cease to trouble us, and routine be at rest? Who are to give us the last stones for bread, the last serpents for fish? At what blessed era may we expect to see the last quack, the last make-believe, the last wolf in sheep's clothing, the last turnip-lantern ghost, the last emrined-skeleton majesty? When is the last Carlyle to abdicate his functions upon the extinction of the last sham? When these 'ends' come to pass, then indeed may we find opportunity to open a new and most glorious chapter of beginnings.

## Science at Your Service

### AN ALARM FOR CAR-THEFT

A DEVICE for insertion into an electrical circuit has been produced for use as an alarm when a car is 'unofficially' tampered with. It can be fitted into the dashboard of a car or lorry. Inside the device eight radially-mounted fingers cause connection makes or breaks with eight contacts when the dial-control is rotated. Certain of the contacts are wired in series with the ignition system and the rest are wired in parallel with the fuses or horn. The dial shows the position of the fingers by letters. The driver can start the car without sounding the alarm by rotating the control knob into each position known to be wired into the ignition circuit; any other movement must make one of the other connections that is linked with the horn or fuses.

This device can be easily adapted for use as a safety-switch on machinery, thus ensuring that unauthorised use is prevented. It can also be incorporated into safe-locks or building burglar-alarms. However, it would seem to be best suited for vehicle use; and for lorries or commercial vans that carry theft-tempting loads, the cost of the alarm can be looked upon as a very cheap insurance.

### INTERIOR PAINTS

Two new interior paints are being offered, and neither requires a special undercoating. One provides a flat or matt finish and is washable or scrubbable with little tendency to become shiny through rubbing. The other gives a sheen finish midway between full gloss and dead flat, is also thoroughly washable, and is gaining preference to full gloss paint for finishing the woodwork in rooms where the main wall surface is flat. These paints are full-bodied in consistency, but do not require thinning before use. They are both highly resistant to steam and can be used for kitchens, bathrooms, canteens, etc. A range of twenty-four standard colours, plus black and white, is available for each paint, and all colours are intermixable for securing other shades. The standard colours are mainly of the modern pastel shades.

### A ROCKING COT

Whether it is important for a baby to be able to rock itself to sleep is a matter for authorities on child psychology or physiology. However, there would seem to be some useful evidence in the tradition of the cradle and in the lore of nursery rhyme. Spring attachments for the legs of a cot that will endow it with gentle rocking properties have been designed. The attachment is simply a coil-spring between two steel plates, the upper plate having a pin to insert into the normal castor socket. Alternatively, a clip that pushes over the cot leg and is fixed by two screws is available as a means of attachment. A set of four springs costs only a few shillings, and each spring has a plastic cover to provide a good appearance and keep out dust and dirt.

### ANTI-RAIN GLASS

Silicones are organic compounds of silicon, chemically analogous to the innumerable organic compounds of carbon. A property displayed by most of them is high power to repel water: water on silicone surfaces behaves rather like mercury on normal surfaces—it cannot spread but must form beads that roll off. This feature of silicones is being developed in the U.S. aircraft industry for windscreens that repel drops of water. A fine film, less than a millionth of an inch in thickness, of a silicone is laid upon the glass surface and is retained because it is also closely chemically related to glass itself. Previously, paraffin-based water repellents have been used on aircraft windscreens, but these are not heat-resistant and may have to be renewed daily, especially in the present age of greater and greater speed, with its development of thermal friction problems. The main need for water-repelling windscreens is during landing operations. Windscreen-wipers cannot remove raindrops in very wet weather quickly enough. It is also likely that the water-repelling properties of silicone-filmed windscreens will reduce the problem of icing.

## CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

### PLUGS FOR SHAVERS

The electric- or dry-shaver has made a considerable invasion into masculine life. To-day, a keenly-competitive number of models are offered, and it certainly seems that the initial stage of 'new-method-acceptance' has been passed. Their use in the accustomed place for shaving, however, is officially handicapped. The present regulations of the Institution of Electrical Engineers say that no provision shall be made in electrical installation systems for the use of portable appliances in a bathroom containing a fixed bath. This pronouncement by a professional organisation is given higher status by the Electricity Supply regulations under the 1947 Electricity Act, which say that any installation complying with the Institution's regulations cannot be refused connection with a mains supply. Although this still leaves it open for other installations to be approved for connection, most contractors insist upon working to the standards that are accepted without any uncertainty. This means that plugs or points for electric-razors cannot be fitted in bathrooms.

There is considerable pressure to modify this situation, but there are undoubtedly dangers in modification. If a razor is dropped into a bath full of water, the risk of fatal shock is seriously high. Technical change rather than legal change is needed. A low-voltage razor that can be supplied from a socket-point containing an internal transformer would probably obviate all likely hazards from a bathroom razor-plug. Meanwhile, of course, many users connect their electric-razors with bathroom supply-points that were installed for other purposes. These comments may serve as a reminder that great care is needed when using an electric-razor during a bathroom session that also includes a dip in the bath.

### AN OPEN-FIRE COAL-SAVER

It is trite to say that coal is one of the most serious of Britain's current and long-term problems. Its price is constantly rising, and the total tonnage mined each year cannot meet all demands. By long custom we are wedded to open fires for our main domestic heating load, and again it is trite to point out that open-fire coal combustion is one of the least efficient methods of converting coal into useful heat. An open-fire appliance that has steadily come to the fore in recent winters can claim to be 60 to 70 per cent more efficient than old-fashioned open grates or the more

modern types unless they have a restricted flue-throat. Tests have shown that even when used to provide more heat for longer hours per day than conventional fireplaces, this appliance can still show a 20 per cent fuel-saving. Any class of solid fuel can be burnt; the heat given is direct and indirect radiated heat plus convected heat.

The seat of the fire is low, and the shape of the appliance is designed to direct radiant heat towards floor-level as well as into the upper levels of room space. Convected heat from the outside of the fire-back is sent into the room as a flow of warm air emerging from the gap between the top of the appliance and the sealed connection with the chimney flue. A plate is provided for converting the open-fire into an all-night fire; a fire-screen accessory may be fitted over the fire-opening. The appliance is curved at the back and can be fitted to any fireplace; it is easily fixed and can subsequently be removed as a tenant's fixture. Two controls determine the rate of burning and level of heating—air-inlet control and the damper control; at maximum heating for a room of about 14 by 16 feet in size, only 1 to 1½ pounds of coal are consumed per hour. The finish is of vitreous enamel. At the present price of coal and the average winter's usage for heating a main living-room, it may be given as a reasonable estimate that the cost of coal saved will pay for the appliance in two winters.

### A HANDY ELECTRIC-RADIATOR

A small and inexpensive electric-radiator is among a new range of models produced by a British manufacturer. It has 500 watts capacity, with dimensions 18½ by 13½ by 2 inches; the average surface temperature maintained is 200° Fahr., and it is claimed that this will provide main heating for a 500 cubic feet space or good background heating for 1500 cubic feet. The radiator weighs only 8 pounds, and it can be supplied either with feet for moving from place to place or with brackets for fixed wall-mounting. Various finishes are available—enamel cream, silver, pale green, brown, grey, and white. Another feature is that a double towel-rail can be supplied as an accessory; this is fitted above the radiator, of course. Six other models are made, but the model selected for mention here would appear to offer an unusual and cheap solution for the problems of small-space heating.

## SCIENCE AT YOUR SERVICE

### ALUMINIUM TILES

Aluminium tiles for roofs or walls-surfacing were recently displayed at a building materials exhibition. These tiles, which have an effective unit-area of 1 square foot when laid, interlock on all edges, but fixing is obtained by the lug at the top only. Panels of 3 feet by 1 foot effective size are also manufactured. The weight per 100 square feet of aluminium tiling is 39 pounds only; with the panels, the weight for the same area is 43 pounds. The tiles and panels are available not only with a plain finish, but also in an embossed and alocrom finish at a slightly higher cost. Sound-proofing, which can be applied at low cost on the underside of the tiles and panels, acts also as a protection against corrosion.

### A DOOR-STOP

A new but simple door-stopping device can be recommended. A base-plate for screw attachment to the door carries a rod-arm 8½ inches long. This is rubber-covered at the free end. When not in use as a stop, this arm is held against the door in a flat, upwards-pointing position, the outer side of the base-plate gripping the rod firmly by being at one point just too tight a fit for receiving the rod without contact. When in use, the arm has dropped until the rubber-end is in contact with the ground about three inches from the door: at this angle the arm holds the door firmly. Manipulation is simple. To secure the door in an open position, the arm will need to be pulled out by hand and set in stopping position; but for closing the door, foot-action is all that is needed, one gentle kick lifting the arm and a second one sending it back into its fixed position on the door.

This is a small and neat device, and it should be particularly useful for external doors, such as garage doors that need to be protected from swinging dangerously in windy conditions, or glass-windowed doors that tend to slam with sudden draught. Two models are sold, either singly or in pairs, the slightly dearer model having a better finish. Both prices are low. Fitting requires no more than ability to use a screwdriver.

To CORRESPONDENTS who wish fuller information regarding new inventions, publications, etc. mentioned here, addresses will be furnished, when possible, if (and only if) a stamped addressed envelope or postcard for a reply be sent to the Editor, *Chambers's Journal*, 11 Thistle Street, Edinburgh. To avoid delays, requests of this kind from correspondents abroad will be forwarded to the manufacturer or agent if stamps, postal orders, or imperial or international reply coupons are enclosed for the purpose. The issue of the *Journal* and the heading of the paragraph in which the object of inquiry is described should be given in order to facilitate reference.

### CHEAP GREENHOUSE INSULATION

Retaining warmth in a greenhouse can be as important as providing fresh heat. A gardening sundries company has studied this problem and suggests that polythene film can be used for double-walling the glass panes. Thus, a layer of static air is formed between the glass and the polythene, and, as is well known, static air has considerable insulating properties. The heat-saving by this method is said to be generally equivalent to a temperature gain of 9° Fahr. Polythene film in sheet form can be more easily fixed in wooden greenhouses. If the sheet is cut to size with about a 3-inch overlap, it can be fixed by using cardboard strips and ordinary drawing-pins to hold it to the inside surfaces of the wooden sash-bars. This method of fixing, if it does not involve too many joins, is probably the best. Another method is to fix wires running along the lengths of the roof-ridge and the eaves; the polythene can be hung on this wire frame, though it still needs pinning to the wooden structure at all outer edges to ensure that air between the glass and polythene is sufficiently static to be of insulating usefulness. Metal greenhouses cannot be so easily dealt with, as there is not yet a suitable adhesive for securing polythene to metal in humid conditions.

Fuller constructional details than these and suitable polythene film in sheets of various widths and any lengths can be obtained from the gardening sundries company.

### ALUMINIUM DECK-CHAIR

A deck-chair recently introduced to the British market has a frame made from tubular aluminium; it is therefore strong, but light to carry, weighing only about 5½ pounds. The metal frame is anodised and electro-brightened. The chair can be adjusted for four different seating positions, and it can, of course, be easily folded flat like all deck-chairs. It has arms, but the chair-back is long and not squat. Canvas fittings are in a range of plain colours edged with white piping. For what can be regarded as a luxury-type of deck-chair, the price is moderate.

## Wall-Climbers

NO one will ever be able to say that I recommended planting of an ivy. I think this is the most unloved climber I know. It has ruined the walls of many a house, and it is an absolute breeding-ground for pests and diseases. There is all the difference in the world, however, between the lovely climbing-plants and wall-shrubs which can be used to-day and the dull, dreary, dirty ivy of yesteryear. It is not everyone who has the kind of garden which can give up vast spaces to flowering-shrubs, but most of us have room on house-wall for some lovely specimen.

The wall facing south or south-west, which is invariably the sunniest and hottest, will accommodate very happily the North American trumpet-flower, *Bignonia radicans*. It often appears in modern catalogues as *tecoma*. It is particularly useful because it likes root-restriction, and so will grow happily in quite a small bed. It drops its leaves in the early winter and so it allows the wall to be exposed. It grows to about 15 feet high and for a similar width. It is self-clinging and bears lovely clusters of orange-red trumpet-shaped flowers. What more can you want?

Another climber which always creates a great deal of interest is the Dutchman's pipe, *Aristolochia sipho*. The leaves are half-shaped; the flowers are yellow and brown and pitcher-shaped—hence its common name. It will twine and grow vigorously, but it naturally needs some support if it is going to ramble. Though I always call it a climber for the south wall, it can do well on an east wall in the South.

Everywhere I go, and we have moved house several times, a fire-thorn is planted. This is the *Pyracantha coccinea lalandii*, and it is covered in the summer with masses of white flowers, while in the winter there are literally thousands of orange-red berries, which gives it a glorious appearance. It is an evergreen, and so looks well in the winter. It climbs almost vertically and so it is very easy to train, and it will do quite happily on a west wall.

Another shrub for the west wall, or even one facing south-west, is the *Ceanothus azureus*. The masses of light-blue flowers it produces

from June to December are a sight for sore eyes, but to get the best results one has to prune quite hard in April. Those who prefer can grow a variety called *Cascade*, which perhaps is more graceful. This flowers early in May, the blooms being of a brilliant-blue colour. It needs, however, more room on the whole, and it can be seen on some walls clambering up to a height of 20 feet.

For an east wall, it is well worth while trying the ordinary witch-hazel, *Hamamelis mollis*. This, of course, looks at its best in January and February, when it bears those bright-yellow threadlike-petaled flowers. The leaves which follow are quite handsome, being grey-green in colour. With careful training, it is possible to see that this shrub covers the whole of a house-wall from top to bottom.

*Celastrus articulatus* is somehow almost unknown, and yet it looks at its best in the winter, when it is absolutely spangled with golden-yellow and scarlet fruits. It loses its leaves in the late autumn, and many people prefer this, while it is perfectly happy on an east wall. *Plagianthus lyallii*, though not a true climber, is invariably very happy when grown as a wall-shrub. It is a favourite because it comes into flowering when it is young, and so you get value for money early in its life. The leaves are bright-green and the flowers are white and translucent. When these open out, they disclose the most lovely yellow stamens. With me this shrub flowers late in June. Northern readers had better give it a sunny situation. Southerners will find that it will put up with a more sunless situation.

Those who have a porch should grow *Solanum crispum*. This produces delicate lavender-blue flowers with yellow centres, resembling, of course, those of the potato. It is really a semi-climber, which blooms from the middle of July until the middle of September.

I shall be glad to help readers with their gardening problems. Write to me through the Editor, kindly enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for the reply.

W. E. SHEWELL-COOPER, M.B.E., N.D.H.  
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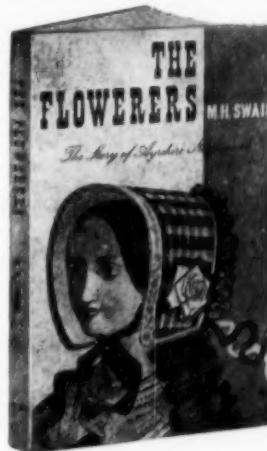
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